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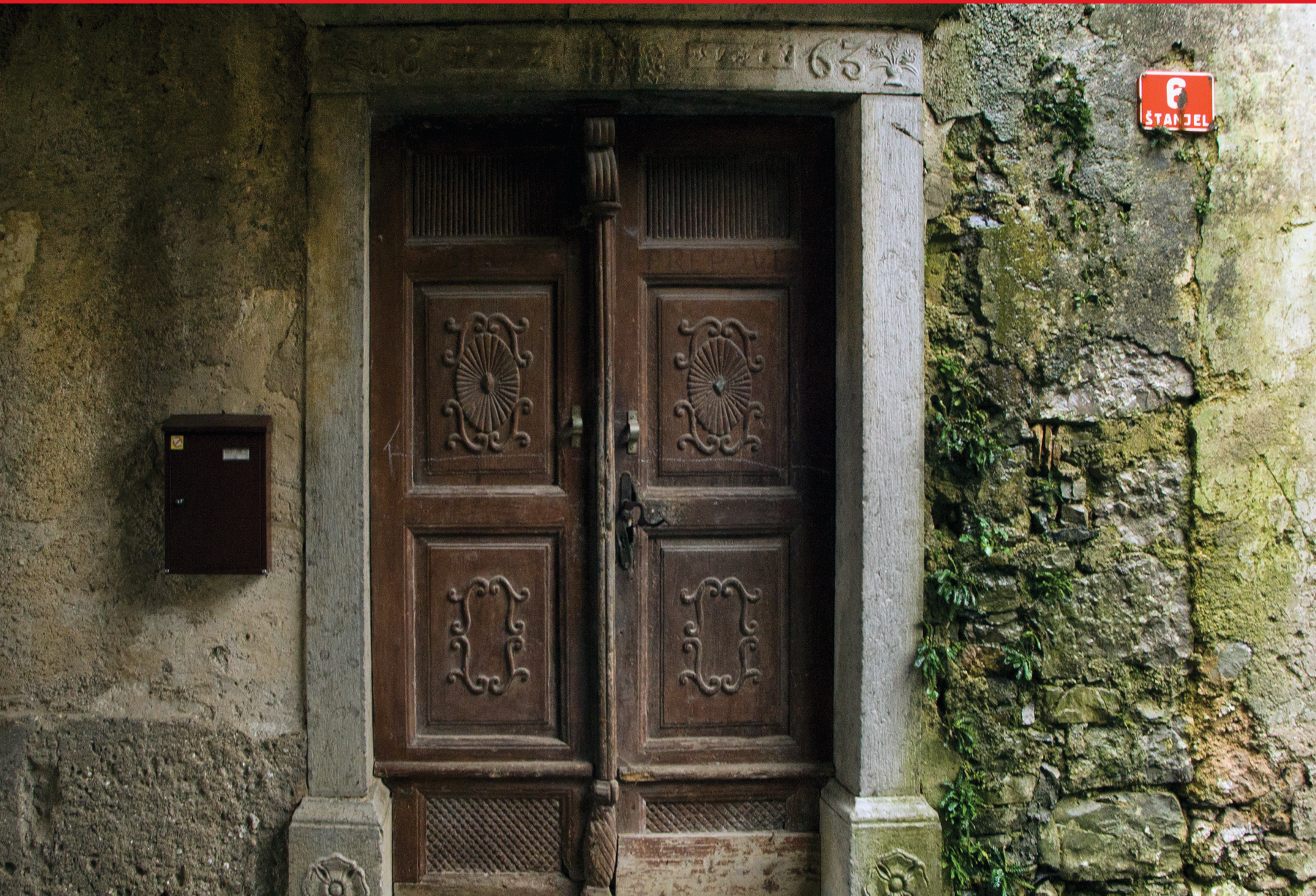

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Original Scientific Article

Issues Facing Faith-Motivated Tourism Expenditure

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Religious tourism is becoming a significant part of general tourist fluctuations. It is expected that this type of tourism will only grow due to developing trends in tourist motivation. In contrast to the increase of tourist flow in faith-motivated tourism is the fact that expenditure in this sector is very low. Considering the importance of religious tourism, the aim of this paper is to detect problems and questions related to faith-motivated tourism expenditure. By analysing these problems and questions, potential solutions and responses can be provided. This paper will use the example of the City of Rijeka to investigate faith-motivated tourism expenditure as well as tourist expenditures not primarily motivated by faith; as well as attempt to find the weakest link in tourism expenditure by means of statistical analysis. The results will clearly show that tourism expenditure is fairly low, especially with regards to faith-motivated tourist expenses; these findings will be used to create a model for a positive increase in faith-motivated tourism expenditure.

Key words: religious tourism, tourism expenditure, issues, Rijeka

Introduction

The paper will delve into the concept of religion-based tourism expenditure, in particular by emphasizing the problems faced by this particular type of tourism expenditure. Tourist expenditure is of great interest to researchers because it is one of the most important elements of tourism since the role and significance of tourism in the economy is measured precisely by tourism expenditure. Tourist expenditure, as such, is very complex, especially related to religious tourism. The question of the significance of faith-motivated tourism expenditure of a certain destination is raised, especially when it concerns a destination where the primary reason for visiting is not religion. Understanding the scope of faith-motivated expenditure and its significance for a tourist destination will enable researchers to define models of religious resources and features that encourage expenditure, and define in which direction a destination should develop its religious facilities and services. This paper will define the elements of tourist demand and religious tourism by using a wide array of literature and also, using the example of the City of Rijeka, present results of research corroborating the thesis that religious motivation does not result in high expenditure in destinations that are not primarily religious centres; such as Lourdes, Fatima, Rome (Liutikas, 2015, p. 197), Međugorje (Vukonić, 2002), Santiago de Compostela, Czestochowa, Mariazell, Mecca, Medina, (Geić, 2011, p. 325), Jerusalem, Mount Athos, Haifa's Bahá'í Gardens (Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010, p. 230).

Literature Review

Tourism expenditure is a complex matter and can be defined in several ways; all definitions depend on which aspect the research is focused. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2008,

p. 12), tourism expenditure is the amount paid for the acquisition of consumption goods and services, as well as valuables, for personal use or gifts, for and during tourism trips. Tourism expenditure can be perceived from an economic point of view (Kesar, 2006, p. 121) or as a statistical occurrence (Medik, 2003, p. 165); nevertheless, one fact remains: tourism expenditure is the result of satisfying tourists' needs. For tourism expenditure to be realized, a certain tourism good or service must be consumed, and above all, it is necessary for tourists to allot a certain amount of their funds to purchase a service or good that will satisfy their needs. Antunac (2001, p. 93) points out that this very act of a tourist's expenditure is the basis of all economic aspects and functions of tourism and its influence on the economy; the act of a tourist's expenditure as well as the amount spent is the primary and only link between tourism and the economy. This act of a tourist's expenditure can provide a basis for isolating those goods and services that are of great importance for tourism demands and create a successful offer that will realize the goals of the tourists, as well as the goals of the tourist destination. Tourism expenditure within the framework of religious tourism is highly complex; we can pinpoint the reason for this in the fundamental aspects of religious tourism.

Religious tourism is defined as a selective type of tourism (Luković, 2008, p. 53; Geić, 2011, p. 210); more precisely, it is categorized as a subtype of cultural tourism (Geić, 2011, p. 322) since spiritual components are an integral part of culture and tradition, and represent an exchange point at which religion, the economy of tourism, and culture come together; all these aspects make religious tourism a highly complex phenomenon. The foundation of religious tourism is visiting religious destinations with the goal of deepening one's faith, as well as deepening one's sense of belonging to a particular religion or church (Kartal et. al., 2015, p. 214; Cerović & Zanketić, 2014; Vukonić, 1998). It can be discerned that the main reason for such travel is to satisfy the spiritual, i.e. religious, needs of the person deciding to take such a trip (Rinschede, 1992; Shinde, 2007). Kartal et al. (2015, p. 215) claim that religious tourism is a selective type of tourism that is the least researched within the contemporary tourism framework; researchers have only started to tackle this issue in recent years, despite the fact that religious tourism is one of the earliest types of tourism (Rinschede, 1992; Rundquist, 2010; Kaelber, 2006).

Religious tourism, understood in modern terms, started developing after World War II; it became a part of global tourism growth, supported by stimuli from both material and spiritual sources. Today, religious tourism is one of the most dynamic segments of the tourism market (Geić, 2011, p.324) and, since it can be heavily influenced by, for example, keepers of religious heritage who can be quite small-minded in their beliefs (Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010, p. 269), this segment of tourism can be described as very specific. One type of religious tourism is the pilgrimage (Scaffidi Abbate & Di Nuovo, 2013, p 501.). Pilgrimage, as an organized visit or form of travel most frequently encouraged by the religious community, has tourist elements in addition to religious ones (Osmanković et all, 2007, p. 184). Kartal and others (2015, p. 216) state that the motivations of religious tourists are visiting sacred places and participating in religious ceremonies while the motivation of pilgrimage tourist is visits and activities to fulfil religious duties. Shinde (2015, p. 181) indicates that the pilgrim motivation can be considered spiritual or religious fulfilment, and the religious motivation is to experience "spectacle" aspects and practice forms of consumption that are absent from the typical images of the pilgrim. When considering religious tourism, one can conclude that it is a very lucrative form of tourism that allowed many religious destinations to become centres of religious, commercial and cultural events; important not only for the destination itself but also for the particular religion and country. Travelers to these destinations are offered infrastructural, cultural, gastronomic and other contents that, in turn, increase investments in these locations. Many researchers claim that religious tourism is of great public and social interest and has great economic potential due to the increase of religion-motivated travel (Nolan & Nolan, 1992; Oslen & Timothy, 2006; Razaq & Nigel, 2007).

In contrast, Smith and Krannich (1998) claim that the potential financial benefits from trade at sacred tourist locations can be overestimated. In his research on Palmyra, Brayley (2010, p. 329) points out that most businesses do not earn more during important religious events when the number of visiting tourists increases. One question arises: do all tourist destinations have this financial potential or only those destinations where the primary reason for the visit is of a religious nature? Wright (2014) claims that a type of study that could correctly define the validity of data on tourism flow motivated by religion has yet to be determined. This compels us to question the validity of data on tourism expenditure of tourists that are motivated by religion; due to direct involvement of primary reasons for traveling (faith, emotions, spiritual fulfilment), which cannot be measured using financial indicators.

Religious Tourism Indicators

Religious tourism has become an important source of tourism expenditure and cannot be neglected when analysing travel motivated by tourism. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that religious tourism generates as many as 600 million national and international religious and spiritual trips in the world. In Europe, 240 million religion-motivated trips are organized on an annual basis; 300 million in Asia and 60 million in the rest of the world. Out of the total number of religion-motivated tourists (the UNWTO estimates this number to be 600 million), there are 280 million pilgrims; 112 million in Europe, 140 million in Asia and 28 million in the rest of the world. Essentially, out of two tourists traveling together, one is an actual pilgrim because each pilgrim usually travels in a pair. According to available data on the most visited destinations of religious tourism, the largest, in India, gets as many as 30 million pilgrims a year. The most famous European religious destinations are Lourdes (8 million pilgrims) and Fatima (up to 5 million pilgrims a year). When analysing the data of the UNWTO, 20% of tourists in the world are motivated by religion. If we analyse data related to income generated by the world's tourism (3.2 trillion USD) and divide income shares into categories based on selective types of tourism, we can conclude that the actual income generated by religious tourism is fairly low and amounts to somewhere between 37 and 47 billion USD.

Table 1 Shares of selective types of tourism within the total revenue from tourism in 2015

Rank	Selective types of tourism	Value (USD)
1	Cultural tourism	800 billion–1.1 trillion
2	Wellness tourism	439–494 billion
3	Gastro truism	350–550 billion
4	Eco/sustainable tourism	324–480 billion
5	Sports tourism	250–375 billion
6	Adventure tourism	115–150 billion
7	Agrotourism	60–160 billion
8	Health tourism	50–60 billion
9	Religious tourism	37–47 billion
10	Volunteer tourism	10–20 billion

Notes Adopted from www.reports.mintel.com (08/09/2015)

The reasons for such low shares of religious tourism in global tourism flows can be found in the lack of statistical measurements of tourism flows within the framework of religious tourism, as well as in the fact that all data related to religious tourism is based on estimates. According to research by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics that included data from 2012, figures on tourism expenditure during longer trips motivated by different reasons clearly show that religious tourism is defined by fairly low expenditure in both Croatia and abroad (Table 2).

Table 2 Total of all expenditures during longer trips in 2012, according to travel motivation (expressed in millions of Croatian kunas)

	Abroad	In Croatia
Seaside vacation	549	2550
Sport activities	354	103
Recreational activities	345	143
Wellness and healthcare programs	80	195
Visiting friends or relatives	1366	1249
City vacation, field trip, culture, leisure time	1359	517
Visiting events, manifestations, festivals	258	94
Enjoying food and drink, gastronomy, wine connoisseurship	27	15
Shopping	132	45
Education, seminars	108	73
Religious reasons	83	27
Other	796	381

Notes author's analysis of data provided by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, www.dzs.hr, 01/09/2015

Tourist Features of the City of Rijeka

The City of Rijeka is situated in the north-western part of Croatia, in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and is defined by the following features: multiculturalism, rich history, and cultural heritage. In recent years, Rijeka has been transformed from an industrial city to a recognizable tourist destination, developing selective types of tourism, including religious tourism. Foundations for the development of religious tourism in Rijeka can be found in the fact that Trsat, a well-known religious center recognized by many pilgrims in Croatia, is in Rijeka's vicinity. In addition to Trsat, there are several other reli-gious destinations that have great potential for developing religious tourism in Rijeka, some of which are St. Vitus Cathedral, the Church of Assumption, the church of St. Jerome and the Dominican monastery, the church of the Madonna of Lourdes and the Capuchin monastery, the church of Saints Fabian and Sebastian, the church of St. Nicholas, a mosque, a Baptist church, as well as a synagogue. All available resources for developing religious tourism in Rijeka are highly advantageous since Rijeka is a city with a complex heritage, multiculturalism and religious tolerance; the existence of sacral centres, temples and religious groups, and accompanying activities can only be perceived as an encouraging element. Apart from sacral centres, temples and religious contents, accommodations within the city of Rijeka are an important resource that must be taken into account. An overview of available accommodations in Rijeka is provided in the following table.

There has been an evident increase in available accommodations in Rijeka in the last ten years (as much as 38.72%). During the analysed period, there have been apparent changes in the type of accommodations, and two new types have been introduced: hostels, which started developing in 2006, and student accommodations that grew when a new dorm opened in 2014. During the same period, private accommodations have grown in number while the number of lodgings decreased by 57.14%.

There were 90,177 registered arrivals as well as 173,549 overnight stays in 2014. The dominant role of international demand is evident from the fact that foreign tourists make up more than two thirds of all tourism flow (3.80% of all arrivals, which 1.40% of all overnight stays) in the PGK County.

Between 2004 and 2014, the number of arrivals increased by 68.00%, while overnight stays increased

Table 3 Accommodation capacities in Rijeka from 2004 to 2014 (available beds)

CATEGORY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Hotels	456	387	502	515	515	554	554	554	554	554	554
Hostels			61	61	61	61	61	91	120	448	429
Private accommodations	42	63	92	105	126	173	189	213	272	411	573
Camp	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350
Lodgings	882	882	882	882	378	378	378	378	378	378	378
Student accommodations											116
TOTAL	1730	1682	1887	1913	1430	1516	1532	1586	1674	2141	2400

Notes author's analysis of data provided by the Tourist Office in Rijeka (www.visitrijeka.hr)

Table 4 Arrivals and overnight stays of tourists in Rijeka in 2014

2014	ARRIVALS	Percentage (%)	OVERNIGHT STAYS	Percentage (%)
Native	21.176	23,00	41.311	24,00
Foreign	69.541	77,00	132.238	76,00
TOTAL	90.717	100,00	173.549	100,00

Notes author's analysis of data provided by the Tourist Office in Rijeka (www.visitrijeka.hr)

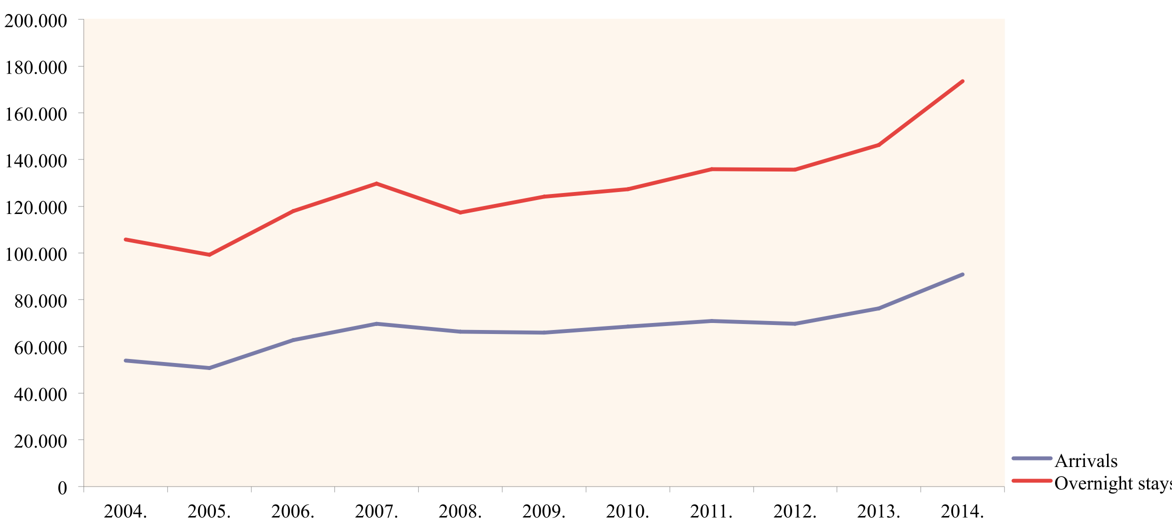

Figure 1 Growth of number of arrivals and overnight stays in Rijeka from 2004 to 2014
Adopted from Tourist Office in Rijeka (www.visitrijeka.hr) 2015.

by 64.00%. When analysing data from 2014, it can be seen that the number of arrivals and overnight stays increased by 19.00%. The positive growth over a period of several years, as presented in the following graph, is a result of the positive increase of arrivals and overnight stays of international guests.

A characteristic common to many destinations related to religious tourism is the fact that it is very difficult to gather precise statistics on the number of visitors, pilgrims, and tourists that arrive at a destination and visit a sacral center. It is only possible to make estimates and attempt to precisely distinguish two separate occurrences; visitors who arrive during religious gatherings and visitors who come to religious centres while sightseeing at other highlights of the city. Regarding estimates, the best preliminary point could be the research results of the Institute for Tourism (2014, p. 45), stating that only 0.2% of all travels in Croatia were religion-motivated. In the PGK County, the percentage of religion-motivated travel was also 0.2%, which is about 4,800 arrivals. To obtain a more precise overview on the arriva als of tourists, pilgrims, and religion-motivated visitors to Rijeka as well as to gather data on their expenditure, research has been conducted; the main charh acteristics and results of the aforementioned research are presented here.

Research Characteristics

With the aim of analysing tourism expenditure motivated by religion in Rijeka, research on tourism expenditure by tourists motivated by religion as well as those not motivated by religion was conducted. The research was conducted using a questionnaire taken by tourists that stayed in Rijeka in June 2015 and pilgrims that visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat (the answers were gathered by personally interviewing the aforementioned participants). A quesh tionnaire containing 11 questions was created; the ree search results are presented in the following chapters.

Tourism Expenditures of Pilgrims Visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat

A total of 502 tourists participated in the questionnaire; 12.5% were 20 years of age and younger, 48.9% were between 21 and 50 years of age, and 38.5% were 51 years of age and older. Local inhabitants were the least represented in the questionnaire: 15.5% of participants came to Trsat from Rijeka, 9% came from its outskirts, and 6.2% came from other parts of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. The largest number of participants came from other regions of Croatia (57.9%), 11% of participants came from Germany, and 0.4% came from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of all the participants that visited Trsat, 45.6% visited for the first time, 12.4% stated they come every year, 21.7% visit Trsat several times a year, and 20.3% have been coming to Trsat for years. Most visitors came as part of an organized group (50.4%), 40.8% came with family, 8.4% came alone, and 0.4% of participants declined to answer this question. A total of 57.6% participants arrived using organized transport, 27.7% came by car, 10.2% came on foot, while 4.6% used public transport. The primary reasons for visiting the sacral centre were religion and worship of the Madonna of Trsat (78.8%), tradition and culture (13%) and taking a vow and great reverence for the Madonna's Mercy (8.2%). Most visitors were there on a one-day trip (85.8%). A total of 12.7% stayed in Rijeka, but only 1.5% stayed in Opatija, on Krk or in Rabac. A detailed analysis of tourism expenditures of visitors at Trsat is provided in the following graph.

It is evident that the largest share of funds is spent on beverages (69.5%) while souvenir shopping comes second. To analyse specific expenditure motivated by religion, pilgrims were asked to estimate how much they spend on souvenirs. An analysis of the results is provided in the following table.

Table 5 Financial expenses of pilgrims allocated for souvenir purchase

Expenses in HRK	% of pilgrims
10.00	9.1
10.00–20.00	18.6
21.00–50.00	19.0
51.00–100.00	13.1
More than 100.00	7.5
I do not buy souvenirs	32.7
TOTAL	100

One third of all pilgrims stated that they do not buy souvenirs, while those who stated that they do purchase souvenirs opt to spend smaller amounts of money (between 10 and 20 HRK).

Gathered data has shown that the total amount of expenditure per person while visiting Trsat is less than 100 HRK (69.6%); 31.8% spend under 200 HRK. 13.3% of participants spend between 200 and 300

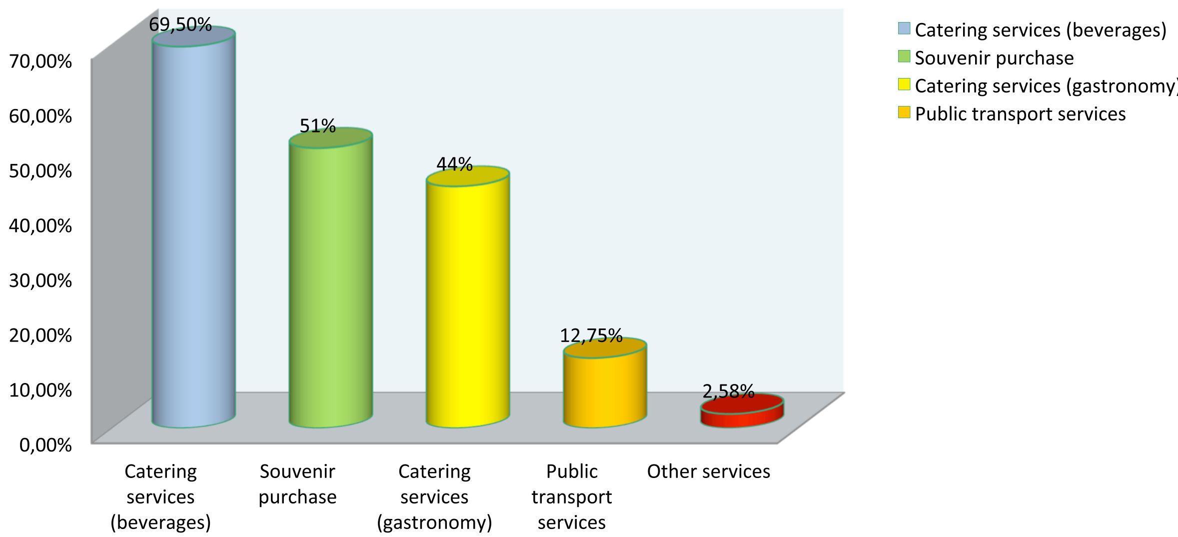

Figure 2 Tourism expenditure of religious visitors while staying at Trsat

HRK, 3.8% spend between 300 and 500 HRK while as little as 3.6% of participants spend more than 500 HRK.

Tourism Expenditures of Visitors not Primarily Motivated by Religion

The analysis of attitudes of tourist that visited Rijeka is based on 97 correctly filled questionnaires; 58.9% if respondents were women and 41.1% men. The majority of tourists were 51 years of age or older (35.4%); there were 27.1% of participants between the ages of 31 and 40, as well as those between the ages of 41 and 50; 10.4% of participants were between the ages of 21 and 30. The majority of participants (77.1%) came to Rijeka by way of organized groups, while there were considerably fewer individual visitors. The aforedmentioned tourists were of different nationalities although most of them declined to answer where they were from (52.6%). The tourist originated from, as follows: 15.5% from Hungary, 14.4% from the USA, 6.2% from Japan, 5.2% from Spain, 3.1% from Germany, 2.1% from Bulgaria and 1% from Ireland. During their stay in Croatia, the participants visited several religious centres. The majority visited the St. Vitus Cathedral (83.4%) and the pilgrimage at Trsat (60.6%). Both places were visited by 79.3% of particoipants; 40.2% of participants visited only these two places, while the rest visited other sacral hubs in Rijeka: the church of St. Jerome was visited by 34% of participants, the Church of Assumption was visited by 32.9%, the Capuchin church of the Madonna of Lourdes was seen by 6.1%, the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas was seen by 1%, which is the same share of tourists that visited the synagogue. A total of 13.4% of participants only went to visit the pilgrimage on Trsat, without visiting other sacral hubs. In conclusion, tourists in Rijeka mostly visit a great number of religious centres, most prominently the cathedral of St. Vitus and the pilgrimage at Trsat.

Reasons for visiting this religious destination are provided in Table 6. Participants were offered mulitiple-choice questions. The majority of tourists that visited a religious hub did so to learn about the local culture (67%) in contrast to the minority of tourists who visited the centre because it is a popular destination (16.5%). A significant number of participants visited the site out of a need for prayer at a holy place (42.3%), out of a wish for participating in a religious ceremony (35.1%) as well as the fact that the place holds a symbolic meaning (34%). In conclusion, tourists who visit religious destinations in Rijeka do so to learn about the local culture, and less because of religious motivation and spiritual sentiment.

The aim of this research was to establish the habits of tourists and their expenses while visiting Rijeka. A total of 27.8% answered in the negative when asked if they were visiting for more than a day and whether they were staying overnight. A third (33%)

Table 6 Reasons for visiting a religious destination

REASONS FOR VISITING A RELIGIOUS DESTINATION	OCCURRENCE	%
Need for prayer at a holy place	41	42.3
Wish for participating in a religious ceremony	34	35.1
Feeling a connection on a national level	28	28.9
Enjoying a unique atmosphere	31	32.0
Place with a symbolic meaning	33	34.0
The destination is a popular tourist attraction	16	16.5
Seeing works of art and cultural heritage	20	20.6
Getting to know the local culture	65	67.0
Learning about history and legacy	17	17.5
Having new experiences	30	30.9

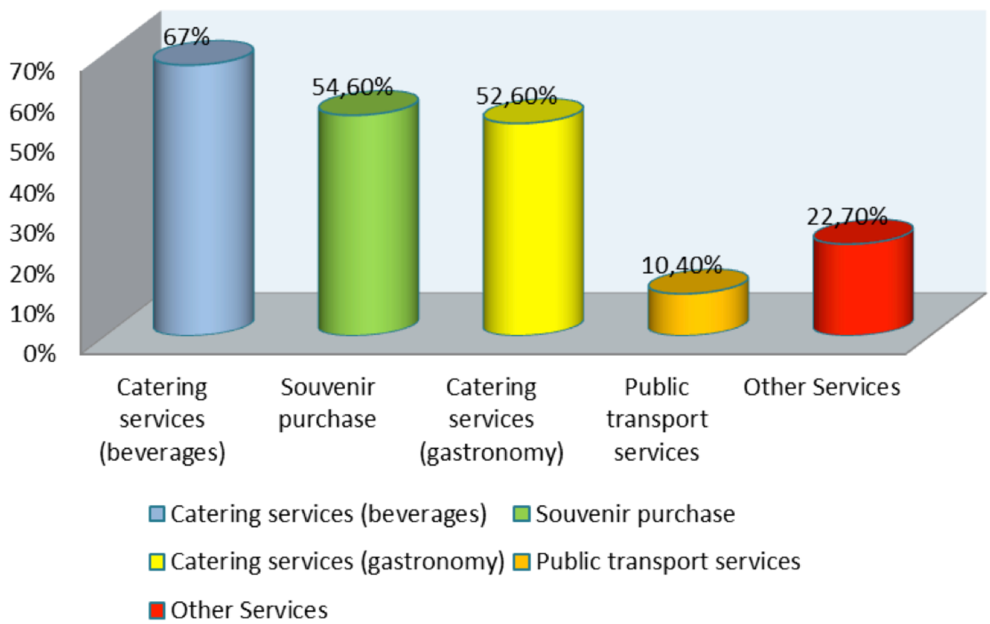

Figure 3 Expenditure of tourists while visiting Trsat

of participants stayed in Opatija, 29.9% stayed on the island of Krk; 7.3% of participants declined to answer.

As is the case with pilgrims visiting Trsat, tourists also spend the largest amount of funds on beverages, followed by souvenir purchase and food. In short, tourism expenditure in these cases is aimed at satisfying primary physiological needs with everything else coming second. It is interesting to point out that, as was the case with pilgrims, a large number of participants (20.7%) do not buy souvenirs; the analysis of data gathered from tourists shows that the highest percentage of participants (31%) do eventually choose to buy religious souvenirs.

Most tourists spend between 100 and 300 HRK per person when visiting Rijeka. To be more precise, 31.9% of tourists spend up to 100 HRK, 42.9% spend between 101 and 200 HRK, 17.6% spend from 201 to 300 HRK, 3.3% spend from 301 to 500 HRK, 1.1% spend more than 500 HRK while 3.3% spend nothing.

Table 7 Financial expenses of pilgrims allocated for purchase of religious souvenirs

Expenses in HRK	% of pilgrims
10.00	15.0
10.00–20.00	17.2
21.00–50.00	31.0
51.00–100.00	16.1
I do not buy souvenirs	20.7
TOTAL	100

Source research results, author's analysis

It can be concluded that most visitors (whether they are motivated to visit these sites by religious reasons or as tourists who tour destinations to meet new cultures) spend an average of 100 HRK per day. Discrepancies in data related to the expenditure of pilgrims visiting Trsat and tourists whose primary reason is not religion can be explained by the very nature of the visit; pilgrims visit holy places because of faith, peace and spiritual fulfilment, and find no need for material things. In contrast, tourists not motivated by religion have different needs and wish to buy souvenirs, gifts, and goods to remember their traveling experience.

Conclusions

Religious tourism enriches a destination's tourist offer and is an important part of general tourist fluctuations. There has been a significant increase in travel motivated by religion, but it is difficult to define exact numbers of visitors, pilgrims, tourists as well as tourism expenditure motivated by religion. As mentioned previously, this kind of travel most frequently is organized by religious communities and this is same in the case of Croatia, where the Roman Catholic Church organizes pilgrimage travels; therefore, there is no evidence on the exact number of visitors and travellers. This is why there are still no precise statistics on the number of visitors to religious destinations which, in turn, makes it difficult to provide accurate data; all data on the aforementioned issues is purely an estimate.

It must be emphasized that these estimates on tourism expenditure by pilgrims at religious centres are inaccurate, because it includes personal expenses such as alms and fees for ceremonies that are all exchanged within the religious centres. These expenditures are not registered by regular economic indicators but are still funded by tourists themselves during their travels. Herein lies the controversy of tourism expenditure for it is nearly impossible to estimate or confirm.

The second problem related to tourism expenditure motivated by religion is the fact that expenses within the framework of religious tourism do not have specific indicators and is by far the lowest type of expenditure among all types of selective tourism; this is probably due to pilgrims' intrinsic motivation. Tourists who travel because of religious reasons seek spiritual riches, faith, peace, and serenity; financial motivations are not their primary focus. It is possible to influence tourism expenditure using various tools and methods.

By broadening the offer and by enhancing the quality of such contents, the growth of tourism expenditure motivated by faith can be achieved. Tourism offers at holy places have a positive economic impact on the local community. These contents increase the attractiveness of a tourist location and, by mixing religious and secular attractions, make the location more competitive in comparison to other religious destinations. Forming partnerships is one of the most important means of increasing tourism expenditure and introducing positive financial elements. Travel that includes visiting a holy place usually includes visiting other attractions and *vice versa*. In order to secure a positive corroboration between secular and spiritual locations, all stakeholders (both religious leaders and location management) must participate in activities that ensure the creation of a development strategy, the increase of tourism expenditure and allow for the expansion of existing attractions in religious locations.

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Original Scientific Article

Restaurant Quality Measurement Based on Marketing Factors – The Managers' Perspective

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The importance of quality has been recognized in most service industries, as it generates revenues and has a strong impact on customer behaviour. The measurement of restaurant service quality has attracted increasing attention from hospitality researchers since the implementation of the Conceptual Model of Service Quality and the SERVQUAL instrument in the mid-1980s. As a fairly new topic, it requires frequent and critical monitoring that would shed light on current research and make needed adjustments regarding the methodological research process and inquiry focus. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of several quality factors in guests' assessment of restaurant quality. However, to date no study has examined the marketing perspective (7P) of service quality. Because there is no consensus in the scientific literature regarding which marketing quality factors matter in assessing the quality of the dining experience, this paper describes and tests the development of a marketing-oriented Restaurant Quality Model. Food quality often seems to be accepted as the fundamental component in determining the quality of the dining experience; however, several studies have identified that other quality dimensions are also important in delivering quality. Special attention was therefore devoted to a marketing perspective and the restaurant managers' perception of what customers expect from a quality service, because managers' perceptions can represent a major gap in delivering quality service, according to the literature (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). A sample of 207 valid questionnaires obtained from managers of different restaurant facilities in Slovenia is analysed. The results show that according to managers the most important marketing quality dimensions for ensuring restaurant quality are 1) people, 2) promotion, placement and price, and 3) product (food), while other marketing factors are not statistically significant in determining restaurant quality. Research results also reveal that the results of numerous studies are mutually inconsistent and contradictory. This research has raised many questions in need of further investigation. It is suggested that future research focus on the analysis of the gap between consumers' expectations and management's perceptions.

Key words: Restaurant quality, service quality management, F&B management, marketing mix, Slovenia

Introduction

In the highly competitive restaurant industry, satisfying guests should be the critical objective of all businesses that wish to prosper and encourage repeat business. A crucial challenge for all restaurant managers today is how to offer food and services of a proper quality. There are many industry-specific factors that significantly affect the level of overall service quality: these are volatile demand, small (mostly family-run) businesses, a vast selection of food and beverage products offered, the intangibility of services, labour-intensive production, intense competition, and others. To gain an advantageous edge in this highly competitive environment, the marketing literature has consistently emphasized the importance of a marketing orientation as a strategic tool. The growing recognition of the customer-based marketing approach has suggested that implementing quality as a marketing tool is the essential element in fostering customer relationships and sustainable market share (Sedmak, 2011; Wang, Law, Hung & Guillet, 2014). Understanding customers' needs is the first step in delivering quality services. The best way to manage customers' expectations is to determine what their needs and wants are, strategize how to meet them, and implement these strategies in practice. In the scientific literature, there are several theoretical models to explore customers' expectations and assess service quality. Since the implementation of the Conceptual Model of Service Quality and the SERVQUAL instrument by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985, the issue of restaurant service quality has received considerable critical attention. Several attempts have been made (Kim, Ng & Kim, 2009; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Vanniarajan, 2009) to improve and develop specific quality measurement techniques suited to the needs of the restaurant industry (measurement tools are presented in Chapter 2.1.1). All of these techniques focus on specific aspects of service delivery, such as food, environment, cleanliness, price perception, and other factors (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Ayeh & Chen, 2013; Barber, Goodman, & Goh, 2011; Edvardsson, 2005; Han, Back, & Barrett, 2010; Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012; Raajpot, 2002; Voon, 2012) and are based on the theoretical concept of the generic Service Quality model, according to which the gap between customers' expectations and managers' perceptions of those expectations will have a major impact on the customers' evaluation of service quality. The first step in ensuring restaurant service quality is therefore to avoid discrepancies between managers' perceptions and guests' expectations. Nevertheless, only a few studies (Briggs, Sutherland & Drummond, 2007; Lau, Akbar & Fie, 2005; Nasution & Mavondo, 2008; Wilkins, Merrilees & Herrington, 2007) have included the measurement of managers' perception about what guests' expect regarding high-quality service. However, based on a thorough literature review, we could not reliably determine the importance of different marketing factors (7P) in the assessment of the quality of the dining experience, as no study analysed restaurant quality from the marketing perspective (7P). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the importance of individual marketing attributes in delivering service quality from the managers' perspective. Managers must understand what features connote high quality to customers in advance, what features a service must have in order to meet customers' needs, and what levels of performance in those features are needed to deliver high-quality service.

To fill this research gap, the current study focuses on seven marketing factors that, according to Kotler (2004), form the fundamental part of restaurant services. We assume that, according to managers, all marketing factors have a significant impact on guests' satisfaction as they form an inseparable part of the dining experience. The goal of this article is to describe the development of a marketing-oriented model for measuring restaurant quality and to empirically investigate which marketing factors (7P), according to managers, influence the overall restaurant quality. We, therefore, hypothesize that:

H1: Restaurant managers perceive all marketing quality dimensions (7P) as relevant for ensuring overall restaurant quality.

Testing this hypothesis calls for a literature review inquiry into recent research on restaurant quality. As no previous study analysed managers' perceptions from the marketing perspective, in order to capture the complexities of the phenomenon, a theoretical quality model was developed. In the second part of the study, the model was empirically tested. The overall structure of the study consists of four chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter Two begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions. Chapter Three is concerned with methodology, and finally, the conclusion presented in the final chapter gives a brief summary and critique of the findings.

Theoretical Background

Service Quality

Defining service quality requires a specific approach to quality measurement, as it is not based on general objectivity and measurability. The approach from the standpoint of the customer is based on a highly subjective perspective. While a variety of definitions have been suggested (Grönroos, 1984, 1990; Langer, 1997; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reeves & Bednar, 1995), this paper is based on the definition suggested by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), who defined service quality as the ability of a service to fulfil and exceed guests' expectations. The common characteristic of all service quality definitions (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reeves & Bednar, 1995; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Van Vaerenbergh, Larivière & Vermeir, 2012) is the consumer-based concept, which makes service quality a highly subjective and relative phenomenon that differs based on who is judging the service. In our study, specific marketing factors involved in the marketing mix (7P) are used as key quality dimensions.

A large and growing body of scientific literature has investigated the theoretical concept of service quality. Several attempts have been made to capture the essential characteristics of service quality in theoretical models. These models are especially important, because they provide a theoretical basis for various techniques (instruments) for measuring service quality. The American school (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1993; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994) is mainly focused on identifying the criteria that consumers use in evaluating the quality of services. Researchers have contributed a five-step model of service quality and an instrument for measuring service quality, the SERVQUAL instrument, in which they defined five dimensions of service quality: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness. Meanwhile, researchers from the Scandinavian school (Grönroos, 1990; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991) have identified two major aspects of service quality: technical quality (the tangible aspect of the quality) and functional quality. Drawing on an extensive range of sources, the scholars (Candido & Morris 2000; Lin, Chan & Tsai, 2009) used various methods in an attempt to create valid and overall service quality models. Candido and Morris (2000) defined a new model with 14 steps, but an in-depth analysis revealed that the model is mainly based on the five-step model. None of these modified models has received significant scientific validation. Conversely, several authors have highlighted the need to break the link between the traditional American and Scandinavian schools and have proposed alternative quality models. Lin et al. (2009) upgraded the traditional IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) model and developed a new model called IPGA, which was designed to optimize the use of production resources with the aim of improving the quality of services offered. Nevertheless, all these studies highlight the need for the future development of service quality management.

Tools for Measuring Service Quality

In our study, we have focused on tools (techniques) that collect quality information based on pre-determined standards, although the customers' feedback can also be obtained by various qualitative techniques. According to Uran Maravić, Gračan and Zadel (2014) restaurant quality can be measured through different systems: systems in which experts assess restaurants (e.g. Michelin, Gault Milla, and AAA Diamonds); systems in which restaurants are assessed on the web by guests (e.g. Yelp, Zagat, Trip Advisor); systems in which restaurants are assessed by journalists/culinary critics; and systems in which restaurants are assessed on the basis of various academic techniques. Despite the unquestionable significance of qualitative techniques, we decided to use quantitative techniques in our study. Some of these techniques (often also referred to as models) measure service quality based on the quality gaps that occur as a result of differences between guests' expectations and perceptions (SERVQUAL, DINESERV); some are one-dimensional and focus solely on service performance evaluation (SERVPERF, Dineserv.per); some combine quality and importance measurement of different service factors (SERVIMPERF); and finally some focus on employees' responses to specific critical situations (Critical Incident Technique). The predominant quantitative measurement technique is the SERVQUAL instrument (Marković, Raspor & Šegarić, 2012), which measures quality based on the gap between guests' expectations and perceptions. According to Aigbedo and Parameswaran (2004), all five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument have not yet been fully validated. Therefore, the authors propose additional metrics that would better explain the gap between expectations and perceptions. Other authors (Jensen & Hansen, 2007; Ryu, 2005) have highlighted the need for a tailored academic approach to service quality measurement. Kukanja (2014) analysed the inclusion of different quality dimensions in restaurant quality models. According to this author, specific state-of-the-art techniques (e.g. Tangserv, CIERM) have moved away from the traditional RATER dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument, which indicates the necessity of further investigation of restaurant management quality.

Management's Perceptions of Customers' Expectations

There are relatively few studies examining managers' perceptions of customers' expectations. Wilkins, Merrilees and Herington (2007) and Nasution and Mavondo (2008) found that researchers have not considered management perceptions to be a fundamental prerequisite for high-quality service delivery. This insight is also consistent with previous research in services (Briggs, Sutherland & Drummond, 2007; Lau, Akbar & Fie 2005), which suggests that managers may not always understand what customers expect. In an international study conducted by Yavas and Rezayat (2003), it was shown that managers' perceptions of quality are mainly conditioned by the individual (cultural) characteristics of managers and the organizational characteristics of the firms. In another major study, Wilkins, Merrilees and Herrington (2007) found that managers of luxury hotel properties in Australia do not perceive quality to be a multidimensional construct and simplify the meaning of its dimensions. According to Lau, Akbar and Fie (2005) managers must constantly monitor guests' expectations and compare them to executive perceptions. As noted by and Martínez-Tur, Tordera, Peiró and Potocnik (2011) customers' expectations measurement should be the key part of each general business strategy. In the case of the Slovenian hotel industry, the study by Uran (2003) offers the most comprehensive empirical analysis of the internal (organizational) gaps in delivering service quality. According to the findings, due to organizational gaps, quality management cannot be used as a strategy of differentiation in the Slovenian hotel market.

Methodology

Research Process and Sample Description

Following the conceptualization and operationalization of the service quality construct, a 35-item instrument for assessing managers' perceptions of restaurant quality was formulated and empirically tested. Although in many questionnaires (Marković et al., 2012) individual quality factors are substantively combined to express the characteristics of several factors in a single, uniform quality factor (e.g. attractiveness of car parks and surrounding areas), in our study we have exclusively used one quality characteristic for the description of each quality factor (see Table 1). The level of managers' perceptions was measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The model is based on the performance (performance only) aspect of quality measurement (Abdullah & Rozario, 2009; Keith & Simmers, 2011; Landrum, Prybutok & Zhang, 2007). The questionnaire was pretested on five restaurant managers who were invited to participate in the formation of the research instrument. Based on their suggestions, some minor changes were made. Our study was conducted from January to June 2014. The research was performed by ten interviewers in different restaurant settings in Slovenia. A total of 332 independently operated restaurants were included in the study, representing 10% of the population of Slovenia. The research was conducted by direct interviews with restaurant managers in randomly selected restaurants. Managers were asked to fill in the questionnaire. According to the surveyors, some managers refused to participate in the study for a variety of reasons. The final analysis is therefore based on 207 valid questionnaires, representing 6.2% of the relevant population in Slovenia. In the first step, descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyse the respondents' demographic characteristics. The majority of the respondents were an average of slightly less than 40 years of age, and a large majority of the sample was composed of male managers (69.4%). The largest proportion of managers completed one of the programs for vocational secondary education (59.2%), while 40% of managers acquired higher education. Despite the overwhelming proportion of managers with lower levels of education, we have found that they have a relatively large amount of work experience in the industry, with an average of 19.2 years. In addition to demographic data, restaurant ownership was analysed. Results show that almost three quarters of managers (69.1%) own the restaurant they manage, while only a small proportion of managers (30.9%) are employed as professional experts.

Questionnaire Development

The small size of the dataset (see Chapter 2.2) meant that it was not possible to base our qualitative research on studies that analysed managers' perceptions from the marketing perspective. Therefore, to capture the complexities of the phenomenon, we had to base our literature review on studies that analysed customers' quality perceptions from various marketing perspectives. The results of several studies presented below emphasize the importance of different quality factors, as scholars base their studies on different (specific) quality factors. Nevertheless, no study before has empirically investigated and compared all seven marketing quality dimensions (7P) in a uniform questionnaire.

Product (Food)

Numerous studies have reported that food is the most important quality dimension in the restaurant offering (Gupta, McLaughlin & Gomez, 2007; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Vanniarajan, 2009). All presented studies outline a critical role of food quality evaluation in correlation with other quality factors. Nevertheless, in several international studies (Kim et al., 2009; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Vanniarajan, 2009), food was identified as the most important quality dimension. Sulek and Hensley (2004) proposed that the quality of food should be simply defined by three key characteristics: food safety, attractiveness and digestibility. Based on the literature review, we used the following quality factors in our research model: offer volume (selection of dishes), the size of portions, taste, appearance, and the perception of food safety.

People

A large volume of published studies (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Jaafar, Lumbers & Eves, 2008; Mosavi & Ghaedi 2012; Voon, 2012) describes the role of people as the most important quality dimension. Several researchers confirmed the correlation between the guests' quality evaluation process and the demographic characteristics of service staff. Luohe and Tsaur (2011) confirmed the link between guests' perceptions and age; Martínez-Tur, Tordera, Peiró, and Potocnik (2011) emphasized the importance of organizational climate; and Wall and Berry (2007) concluded that guests' quality perceptions heavily depend on the type of restaurant itself. Kim and Kachersky (2006) and Meng and Elliott (2008) suggested that guests of gastronomic restaurants are more sensitive to the attitudes of service staff. A study conducted by Waxman (2006) not only stressed the importance of the staff's attitude but also revealed a rich set of social quality factors associated with service staff (e.g. warmth, understanding, etc.). The design of our questionnaire has been based on the results of the presented studies, and some quality factors were logically introduced from the SERVQUAL instrument (employees' politeness), DINESERV (well-trained, competent and experienced staff; the number of staff) and the Tangserv model (customers' interactions with other people). Specific factors that have been introduced to our model for assessing the quality of people are the hospitality of the staff, the competencies of service staff, sufficient number of staff to ensure quality service, the importance of the presence of the restaurant manager, and the distracting presence of other guests.

Price

Subjective assessment of quality is particularly problematic regarding individual perceptions of price. Kim and Kachersky (2006) state that the perceived price level is exclusively a result of an individual psychological process. This view is supported by many authors (Bhattachnaya & Friedman, 2001; Meng & Elliott, 2008) who have stressed the importance of individualism in price perception. According to these authors, a fair price has a significant impact on guests' perception of quality. The restaurant industry tends to be highly price-elastic, as a small change in price is accompanied by a large change in the quantity demanded (Sedmak, 2011). We have noted that price was not identified as the most important quality dimension in any of the presented studies. Nevertheless, many studies stressed the importance of different individual price factors (e.g., an accurate bill is also a quality factor in the DINESERV model). Following the above discussion, we may suppose that price quality can be measured based on the following price factors: understandability of prices, accurate bill, value for money, price competitiveness, and expected price level vs. actual price level.

Processes

The quality of this dimension is most often assessed according to different activities of service staff. Ha and Jang (2010) have primarily treated the quality of the service encounter as a multidimensional construct that is most often the result of guests' subjective evaluation of several quality factors (e.g. the process of welcoming guests, acceptance of orders, guest attendance, etc.). Heung, Wong and Qu (2000) reported that the speed of service is the most important factor in determining guests' perception of quality. Nam, Ekinci and Whyatt (2011) state that it remains unknown how many quality factors there are. Based on the literature review, the following quality factors were included in the questionnaire: staff responsiveness to questions, staff helpfulness in serving guests' needs, staff responsiveness, and restaurant working hours.

Physical Evidence

The importance of the physical, tangible environment has been emphasized by several authors (Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Yunkyong, 2007), as it represents an important basis for evaluating the quality of services. Cheng, Chen, Hsu and Hu (2012) have reported that physical evidence has a different impact on guests who are visiting the restaurant for the first time than on guests who have previously visited the restaurant. In particular, factors associated with cleanliness and noise significantly influence guests' perception of quality (Barber & Scarcelli, 2010). According to the findings presented in this section and based on several quality models (SERVQUAL, DINESERV, Tangserv, SERVPERF), we have included the following quality factors in our questionnaire: cleanliness of the premises, neat and presentable staff, comfort, design in accordance with food offering, and sense of security.

Promotion

According to Sedmak (2011), the most common forms of promotion in the restaurant industry are advertising, sales promotions, public relations, discounts and special offers, outdoor lighted signs and boards, menus and wine lists, direct sales, invitations and announcements and special events. Direct sales present the only form of marketing communication that provides instant feedback from guests. The success of direct (personal) sales heavily depends on the competence, professionalism and charisma of the service staff. Aside from the functional aspect of quality, which heavily depends on service staff sales activities (recommendations) and guests' promotional activities (i.e., word of mouth), the quality of promotional activities is also perceived through the quality of technical factors, such as menu design (Din, Zahari, Othman & Abas, 2012) and discounts (Taylor & Long-Tolbert, 2002). In light of the evidence presented in this section, we have decided to include the following promotional quality factors in our questionnaire: visible marketing signs, signs of special attention and compliments (small gifts, etc.), service staff recommendations, the volume of sales campaigns and special offers, and advertising activities in social media.

Placement

In the restaurant industry, the channels of distribution are most often direct (personal). The most important channels of distribution are location, direct distribution and indirect distribution through travel agencies and other providers that include restaurant offerings in their offerings (Sedmak, 2011). The importance of geographic location was emphasized by Bowie and Buttle (2004) and Parsa, Self, Sydnor-Busso and Yoon (2011). We have decided to include the following quality factors in our study (the tangible factors were logically introduced from the Tangserv model): entrance accessibility, accessible parking areas, neat and clean surroundings, the perception of whether the restaurant is worth the distance travelled, and indirect distribution.

Results and Discussion

The results presented in Table 1 show that all quality factors were evaluated relatively highly (the average mean value is 4.24). Among the seven quality dimensions, the highest-rated dimension was product (food) quality (mean 4.72), with food safety its highest rated factor (mean value 4.89). The results indicate that the lowest perceptions are related to the dimension of marketing communication (mean 3.80), with the lowest scores related to the factor 'Volume of sales campaigns and special offers (2.83)'. The coefficients of variation show how homogeneous guests are in the evaluation of individual quality factors.

Table 1 Analysis of the assessments of quality (descriptive statistics)

Quality dimensions (7P)	Mean	Coefficient of variation (%)
Product (food)		
Selection of dishes	4.58	13.78
Extent of portions	4.75	10.61
Taste	4.80	9.58
Appearance	4.58	13.47
Food safety perception	4.89	7.77
Physical evidences		
Cleanliness of the premises	4.74	10.11
Neat (presentable) staff	4.65	12.29
Comfort	4.66	12.75
Sense of security	4.86	7.97
Design in accordance with food offered	4.61	14.45
People		
Sufficient number of staff for ensuring quality service	4.35	18.89
Importance of the presence of restaurant manager for ensuring quality offering	4.27	25.74
Distracting presence of other guests	2.58	53.39
Hospitable staff	4.68	11.86
Competences of service staff	4.50	14.98
Promotion		
Visible marketing signs	4.35	18.89
Signs of special attention and compliments	4.24	20.25

Quality dimensions (7P)	Mean	Coefficient of variation (%)
Recommendations from service staff	4.49	18.09
Volume of sales campaigns and special offers	2.83	46.89
Advertising activities in the social media	3.36	37.06
Price		
Understandability of price items	4.83	9.68
Accurate bill	4.93	5.48
Value for money	4.82	10.13
Price competitiveness	4.60	17.65
Expected price level vs. actual price level	1.90	62.56
Placement		
Accessible entrance	4.40	21.57
Accessible parking area	4.18	30.58
Neat (clean) surroundings	4.45	17.38
The restaurant is worth the distance travelled	4.57	17.98
The restaurant enhances indirect distribution	2.65	52.06
Processes		
Prompt responsiveness of staff	4.56	14.57
Helpfulness of staff	4.69	12.06
Responsiveness of service staff	4.68	11.79
Restaurant opening hours	4.63	14.47
Waiting time	4.57	13.00

In the next section of the study, an exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess the factor structure of perceived restaurant quality. With this factor analysis, we have attempted to test our hypothesis (H1), which suggests that, according to restaurant managers, all seven marketing quality dimensions (7P) have a statistically significant impact on delivering restaurants' quality. Evidence of the scale's reliability, factor structure and validity on the basis of the analysed data is presented next. First, we checked whether the answers to the above 35 quality factors were normally distributed. Because we could not confirm a normal distribution for any of the selected quality factors of the first set (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KMO) was used), it was necessary to use the Principal Axis Factoring method for the exploratory factor analysis. The first test was performed to evaluate the suitability of the information for inclusion in the factor model. Thus, on the basis of the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.828), as well as the outcome of the Bartlett test of sphericity (χ^2=2536.781; degrees of freedom=595), we estimated that all included variables are suitable for factor analysis. The majority of factors had satisfactory communalities (> = 0.50), suggesting that the greater part of their variability can be explained by the influence of common factors. Two quality factors (variables) with too low communalities ('Food safety perception' and 'Distracting presence of other guests') were excluded from the evaluation process of the factor model in the next step. After a few successive iterations of the factor model evaluation, we finally selected the factor model with 15 factors as the most appropriate (presented in Table 2); while 20 factors had to be removed from further analysis. The suitability of the information for inclusion in the final factor model is also supported by the values of the KMO indicator (0.866) and the outcome of the Bartlett test (χ=1130.289; degrees of freedom=105). Although some commonalities belonging to different factors are little lower than recommended (0.5) (see Table 2), based on a rotated factor solution we have decided to include three main factor groups (quality dimensions) in the final model, as it allows a more meaningful interpretation of the factor model. The final model with three quality dimensions is presented in Table 2. Factor weights with factor loadings above 0.3 and factors that contain more than three items were retained. Factors belonging to the dimensions of promotion, placement, and price were logically merged into a new common quality dimension.

We started our factor analysis with seven marketing quality dimensions (7P), as, following Kotler's marketing theory, we have hypothesized that according to managers' perceptions all seven quality marketing dimensions have a significant influence on guests' overall quality perception. Based on the rotated matrix of factor weights shown in the table above, it is evident that, according to managers' quality perceptions, only three marketing dimensions are important in delivering overall restaurant quality: people (33.04%), promotion, placement and price (8.46%), and product (food) (5.60%). Based on the presented three quality dimensions and the values of their total explained variances, it is clearly evident that according to restaurant managers' beliefs the quality of people (staff) has the greatest importance (33.04%) in assuring restaurant quality, followed by the quality of promotional activities, placement and price (8.46%) and product (food) (5.60%). Other marketing quality dimensions are, in relation to managers' perceptions of quality, not statistically significant. Special attention should be paid to the second factor, which is formed by merging three dimensions (see Table 2). As a further dissection of the results does not contribute to the improvement of the factor analysis, we have decided to keep three quality dimensions in the final model. These results clearly do not support our hypothesis (H1), as only three marketing quality dimensions have a statistically significant influence on delivering overall restaurant quality according to managers' perceptions.

Although we could not confirm H1, the results of this study indicate an important insight into managers' perceptions of restaurant quality. It was hypothesized that all seven marketing dimensions are important in delivering restaurants' quality offerings according to restaurant managers' quality perceptions. The initial theoretical construct consisted of 35 quality factors and seven quality dimensions. However, the results of the (exploratory) factor analysis indicate that only three dimensions and 15 factors are statistically important in delivering overall restaurant quality. Twenty factors had to be removed from the factor analysis, as they had low communalities (< 0.5) and low factor weights (< 0.3). Thus, the results of this study indicate that managers perceive restaurant quality based on only three marketing quality dimensions and 15 quality factors (see Table 2). These results also indicate that the offered quality is perceived as highly incoherent from the managers' perspective.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine how different marketing quality factors influence restaurant managers' overall quality perception. Based on the qualitative research, we were unable to determine

Table 2 Rotated factor solution

Quality factors	Quality dimensions		
	People	Promotion, placement and price	Product (food)
Sufficient number of staff for ensuring quality service	0.703	0.039	0.040
Competences of service staff	0.665	−0.126	0.112
Signs of special attention and compliments	0.643	−0.031	−0.098
Helpfulness of staff in satisfying clients' needs	0.622	−0.086	0.073
Hospitable staff	0.445	−0.196	0.276
Design in accordance with food offered	0.323	−0.249	0.194
Price competitiveness	0.025	−0.846	−0.067
The restaurant is worth the distance travelled	−0.035	−0.722	0.078
Recommendations from service staff	0.298	−0.596	−0.060
Extent of portions	−0.088	0.070	0.724
Sense of security	−0.153	−0.261	0.604
Taste	0.093	−0.062	0.584
Appearance	0.240	0.113	0.506
Selection of dishes	0.254	0.055	0.445
Neat (presentable) staff	0.311	−0.006	0.416
% explained variance	33.043	8.468	5.605

the significance of different marketing factors, neither from the managers' perspective nor from the guests' perspective, as the results of several presented studies are mutually inconsistent and contradictory. This finding is in accordance with our earlier observations, which have shown that service quality dimensions cannot be generalized. Thus, we have developed and tested a new marketing-oriented model that is based on comprehensive restaurant and marketing methodology (7P). The results of this study have shown that only three (out of seven) marketing dimensions have a statistically significant influence on managers' perception of overall restaurant quality: 1) people, 2) promotion, placement and price, and 3) product (food), while other marketing factors are statistically insignificant. Returning to the hypothesis posed at the beginning of the study, it appears that the quality of people (staff) has by far the greatest significance in ensuring restaurant quality. Surprisingly, food quality was found to have little significance in determining the perception of restaurant quality. It can thus be suggested that, according to managers' beliefs, customers perceive restaurant quality primarily according to the quality of people and not food. Taken together, these results suggest that not all marketing dimensions are significant in ensuring overall restaurant quality, according to management perceptions. This research extends our knowledge of restaurant quality management. This is the first time that all seven marketing dimensions have been used to explore management perceptions of restaurant quality. As the methodology is based on the generic marketing approach (7P), we assume that it may also be applied to other restaurant facilities (e.g. theme restaurants, rural facilities, etc.).

A number of important limitations need to be considered. The major limitation of this study is the absence of customers' evaluation of perceived restaurant quality. The current study only examined domestic managers' perceptions of restaurant quality in Slovenia; thus, additional caution must be applied, as the findings might not be generalized. This research has generated many questions in need of further investigation. Future studies should empirically examine and compare the customer expectation-management perception gap in order to extend the current findings. More broadly, further research is also needed to determine whether differences exist between managers of different types of food & beverage (F&B) facilities and different segments of guests. Randomized controlled trials combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Uran Maravić, Gračan & Zadel, 2014) could provide more precise evidence of the importance of the presented results in ensuring overall restaurant quality. Concerning the enormous importance of staff, further research focusing on the role of this dimension could provide a more detailed understanding of how to manage human resources in restaurant quality management.

For restaurant managers, these results indicate the value of investing substantial effort in understanding the complexity of human resources. Furthermore, as people (staff) represents only one dimension of the restaurant marketing mix, managers must constantly measure the quality of their offering (7P) in order to improve their marketing plans and strategies. To avoid discrepancies between managers' quality perceptions and customers' expectations, restaurant quality measurement should be the key management priority of all restaurant businesses.

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Original Scientific Article

Crisis Management in Cruise Tourism: A Case Study of Dubrovnik

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Purpose – The main purpose of this research was to investigate the existence of crisis management within Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism.
Design/Methods/Approach – In this paper, the author decided to use two paradigms: pragmatism and positivism, which are usually followed by quantitative techniques of data collection. A structured questionnaire enabled the author to collect quantitative data that were processed by descriptive statistics.
Findings/ Practical implications – From this research we have determined that most of the Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism do not have a developed system of crisis management and have not developed leadership in crisis management either. Taking into account the information that we obtained in this study, the author's opinion is that it is necessary to offer a strategic framework of leadership in crisis management that could be used by small and medium-sized cruise tourism stakeholders in Dubrovnik.
Research limitations – The main limitations of this research paper were that only one cruise company was interviewed and that the author of this research paper was not able to verify whether there was indeed a crisis management strategy in the organizations that claimed to have one.
Originality/value – This article depicts current trends in crisis management among Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism and offers a strategic framework for leadership in crisis management that could be used by small and medium Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism.

Key words: Cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, Crisis management, Crisis leadership

Introduction

Cruise tourism as known today has its roots in 1966 when Ted Arison, a young Israeli colonel and former fighter in the Arab-Israeli wars, immigrated to the United States and started a business venture that would many years later be known as the Carnival Corporation (Dickinson & Vladimir, 2008, p. 20). In 1970, cruise tourism recorded around 500,000 tourists (Berger, 2004, p. 3), who used cruises as a form of their vacation; over four decades later, in 2014, that number was 22.1 million tourists (CLIA, 2015a, p. 6). Although in the beginning cruise tourism was mainly focused on the North American market and destinations that are located in the Caribbean Sea, today's cruise tourism has a wider global distribution in which Mediterranean cruises account for 19.5% of the world's cruise tourism (CLIA, 2015b, p.1).

Although cruise tourism is extremely vulnerable to business risks and impacts of adverse events that may lead to crisis, this topic remains quite unexplored. Operational risks that can lead to negative economic consequences for cruise tourism have been examined by London (2010), who, in an interesting way, in the case of cruise tourism in New Zealand, presented five risk management strategies: Establishment of a committee for the co-ordination of cruise tourism, Cruise culture development, Education and training, Creation of national cruise manuals, and Creation of trust and recognition of cruise brand. Hoogkamer (2013) wrote about the challenges of preserving cities of historical importance (using the example of Charleston, South Carolina, USA) under the influence of cruise tourism. In her work, she drew attention to the threats that are the consequences of cruise tourism: pollution by ships, uncoordinated development of destinations under the pressure of the cruise industry, and the loss of intangible heritage influenced by the mass influx of tourists from cruise ships (ibid.).

The newly established situation of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik carries a number of hidden threats that could lead to crisis situations with negative consequences. Dubrovnik has a significant economic benefit from cruise tourism, which is reflected in direct spending of tourists from cruise ships in Dubrovnik as well as indirect benefits that are reflected in the spread of awareness about Dubrovnik as a desirable cultural and historical destination. Bearing in mind that rapid success carries hidden risks and dangers that may, under unfavourable combinations of circumstances, lead to crises, the author of this paper believes that Dubrovnik cruise tourism stakeholders are inadequately prepared for managing crisis situations.

Cruise Tourism in a Cultural and Historical Destination (Dubrovnik)

Data on the physical traffic of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik is officially monitored and published by the Dubrovnik port authority; according to their data, in 2014, Dubrovnik recorded 806,588 tourists brought by cruisers during their 463 arrivals (www.portdubrovnik.hr, 2014). The economic contribution of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik is extremely important, so IZTZG (Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, 2007, p. 75) estimates that 599,462 tourists from cruise ships produced income between 20 and 23 million euros in 2006. If we assume that the dynamics of the consumption of tourists from cruise ships was the same in 2014, it appears that 806,588 tourists from cruise ships produced revenues of around 29 million euros.

As one of the leading cruise destinations in the Mediterranean, Dubrovnik faces challenging impacts of cruise tourism, so it is not surprising that many authors from different viewpoints have written about the impact of cruise tourism there. Thus, IZTZG (2007) and later Benic (2011) described the impacts of cruise tourism on the economy, society, and environment. The negative impact of cruise ships on the environment has been investigated by several authors (Milosevic & Jurjevic, 2004; Jelavic & Kurtela, 2007; IZTZG, 2007; Caric, 2010; Benic, 2011; Peric & Orsulic, 2011), while the problem of the overcrowding of Dubrovnik by tourists from cruise ships has been processed by Raguz Perucic and Pavlic (2012). The challenge of setting the limits of cruise tourism capacity, or its development and carrying capacity is taken up by Ban, Perucic, and Vrtiprah (2014). By summarizing all of the above research studies we come to several recommendations which are necessary for the quality management and sustainable development of Dubrovnik: setting a maximum daily capacity of visitors from cruise ships (8,000 per day); the implementation of the integrated management system in the port of Dubrovnik; better coordination and management of all stakeholders of Dubrovnik cruise tourism; creating a center for the coordination and management of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik; fairer distribution of cruisers or the demand during a year / week / day in order to keep the attractiveness of the destination to the satisfaction of local residents and all tourists; review of legal regulation for the protection of the environment due to the extreme sensitivity of ecosystems; constant monitoring and adaptation of business strategies.

The Fragility of Cruise Tourism in a Cultural and Historical Destination (Dubrovnik)

Cruise tourism in Dubrovnik takes place around its cultural and historical heritage and is closely linked to cultural tourism. Cultural heritage is always in danger of war; sudden, violent natural disasters; political and economic pressures as well as the everyday impact of slow decay, wear and neglect (Stovel, 1998, p. 17). The dynamics of everyday life in which we live constantly increase the potential of threats that can develop into crises of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik. In the not so distant past, Dubrovnik experienced negative consequences for its entire tourism sector under the influence of conflicts, wars, political and economic pressures and in the distant past the catastrophic impact of natural forces. Marx (1851) stated that: 'History tends to repeat itself, first as a tragedy and then as a farce.' Stovel (1998, p. 13) notes that there are passive resistance and a lack of interest in conservative communities regarding the planning and preparation for emergency events. It follows that it is the utmost duty of Dubrovnik cruise tourism stakeholders to create a culture of open and constructive dialogue that would bridge the differences between themselves and those who are directly responsible for planning emergency events and those that must provide support during emergencies.

Crises and Crisis Management in Tourism

Faulkner (2001, p. 135) argues that we live in a world prone to disasters and that the number of disasters and crises affecting the tourism industry is growing. In recent years, global tourism has, in fact, experienced a number of crises and disasters, including terrorist attacks, political instability, epidemics, natural disasters and economic recessions (Ritchie, 2004, p. 669). Glaesser (2006) notes that the development and prosperity of the tourism industry are from time to time threatened under the influence of negative events (terrorist attacks in Egypt, Bali, New York; SARS; the tsunami in Asia). Tourism is unable to isolate itself from external influences, and unforeseen events may cause crises in tourism (Henderson, 2007, p.1). Contemporary crises do not recognize and disrespect national boundaries and do not restrict themselves in specific legislative areas so that smaller crises in one part of the world can cause significant impacts in other parts of the world, due to the globalization of the tourism market (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008, p. 68).

Crisis and Crisis Attributes

Many authors have attempted to define 'crisis' to better understand this phenomenon; however, even today we are surprisingly in a situation in which we still have no generally accepted definition of a crisis, and the very concept of the crisis is overused (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Ritchie, 2004). Pauchant and Mitroff (1992, p. 12) believe that the crisis is 'disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, its existential core.' One of the first comprehensive definitions was developed by Pearson and Clair (1998) who claims that an organizational crisis is a rather unlikely, strong-shock event that threatens the further feasibility of the organization and is characterized by the dimness of causes and outcomes as well as by a deep belief that decisions must be made quickly (see in Crandall, Parnell & Spillan, 2010). The crisis is a sudden or developed change, which results in a problem that must be addressed immediately (Harvard Business School Essentials 2004).

Santana (2003) points out that a crisis is a process that starts from events that, if not properly addressed, have the potential to evolve and cause an adverse outcome. Taking into account, the duration of a crisis, Pearson (1996) lists three types of crises: *a sudden crisis, successive crisis,* and *prolonged crisis*. Exploring the roots of crises, Henderson (2007) finds that the causes of most crises in tourism are located in the economic, political, socio-cultural, environmental and technological domains. Indeed, crises and disasters are a universal reality, and they are an inseparable part of the human condition (Mitroff 2004, p.33). Acknowledging the fact that most crises are not defined by one event or that causes may arise repeatedly overlapping with the initial and final stages of the cycle of a crisis (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, see Braden et al. 2004), Braden et al. (2004) have created a model that gives us a clear insight into the cycle of crises.

Crisis life-cycle Model

The crisis life-cycle is framed by time and degree disequilibrium (Braden et al. 2004, p. 5). The vertical axis illustrates the amount of stress or chaos felt by members of the organization and it can be divided into a *comfort, learning and danger zone* (Saar, 2004, see in Braden et al. 2004, p. 5). The comfort zone is considered to be the status quo, and this is where most of the organizations or bureaucracy wants to stay. Unfortunately, organizations that remain locked in a *comfort zone* hold their values, culture, and operational paradigm in a static state in relation to an environment that is forever changing (Braden et al., 2004). Above the comfort zone, there is a critical area bordered by a *learning zone* and *danger zone*. The line above *the comfort zone* has been described as the minimum amount of stress that is needed in order to change the organization. The size of the *learning zone* is directly related to the organizational ability to manage stress. Crossing over the line of the *learn-*

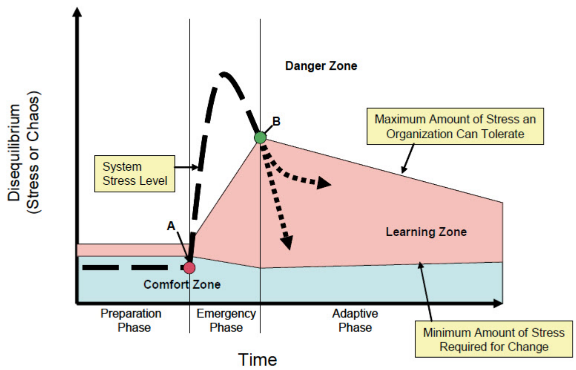

Figure 1 Crisis life-cycle model
Source Braden et al. (2004, p. 6)

ing zone, we enter the danger zone. The line between *the learning zone* and *the danger zone* is the limit at which too much stress can cause organizational collapse. Crises typically cause a situation where the organizational stress level jumps into *the danger zone*. One quite challenging task of leadership is to create a sufficient amount of instability that will keep the organization in the *learning zone* but outside *the danger zone* (Braden et al., 2004).

Crisis Management in Tourism

Crisis management can be observed from the functional and institutional aspect. Institutional crisis management refers to a group of people who are responsible for the activities of crisis management, and they are the bearers of functional crisis management, which is related to the tasks and processes changes in the time at which a crisis occurs (Glaesser, 2006, pp. 21-22, Popesku, 2011). Indeed, understanding the type of crisis to which the destination is receptive greatly influences the development and implementation of strategies for crisis management (Ritchie, 2004, p. 675).

Strategic framework of Crisis Management in Tourism

The interweaving of human and natural systems has led to an extremely complex situation in which all of today's organizations and tourist destinations, during their life cycle, may be confronted at some point with inevitable changes that may lead to a crisis or disaster (Faulkner, 2001). All businesses are on the brink of chaos, and leaders must accept the fact that although their businesses are currently not in crisis, they are still in the introductory phase or in the crisis preparation phase (Fink, 2000). Ritchie (2004) offers a strategic framework for the management of crises and catastrophes in the public and private sectors of the tourism industry, and his model consists of three main stages: prevention and planning; implementation; and evaluation and suggestions.

Crisis and Disaster Management: a Holistic Strategic Approach

Crisis and Disaster Prevention and Planning

During the phase Pre-event and Prodromal stage, there is a number of activities that can be undertaken by the private and public sector regarding developing strategies and plans to prevent or mitigate the impact of a crisis or disaster (Ritchie, 2004, p. 674). Proactive, strategic planning significantly reduces risks, failures in communication, improves the management of resources and mitigates the manifested effects of a crisis (Heath, 1998, p. 17).

Strategic Implementation

When a negative event begins to develop into a crisis, for managers this is a clear signal that they are entering the *Prodromal stage* phase of the crisis cycle (Ritchie, 2004, p. 675). Ritchie (ibid., pp. 675-679) argues that if managers are aware of the impending crisis, and in this regard during the earlier stages have developed clear contingency or emergency procedures, then the following steps lie ahead:

- *Strategic evaluation and strategic control* boil down to the quick choice of strategies and their implementation to limit the harm caused by the crisis.
- *Crisis communication and control* is a communication strategy prepared in detail that is primarily engaged in providing accurate and consistent information to the public, with the empowerment of the image of an organization that has faced the crisis.
- *Resource management* of a destination or organization is nothing more than the process of reorganizing and reconfiguring all existing resources. It is very important that the standard bureaucratic management structure is replaced by a freer structure that provides greater flexibility.

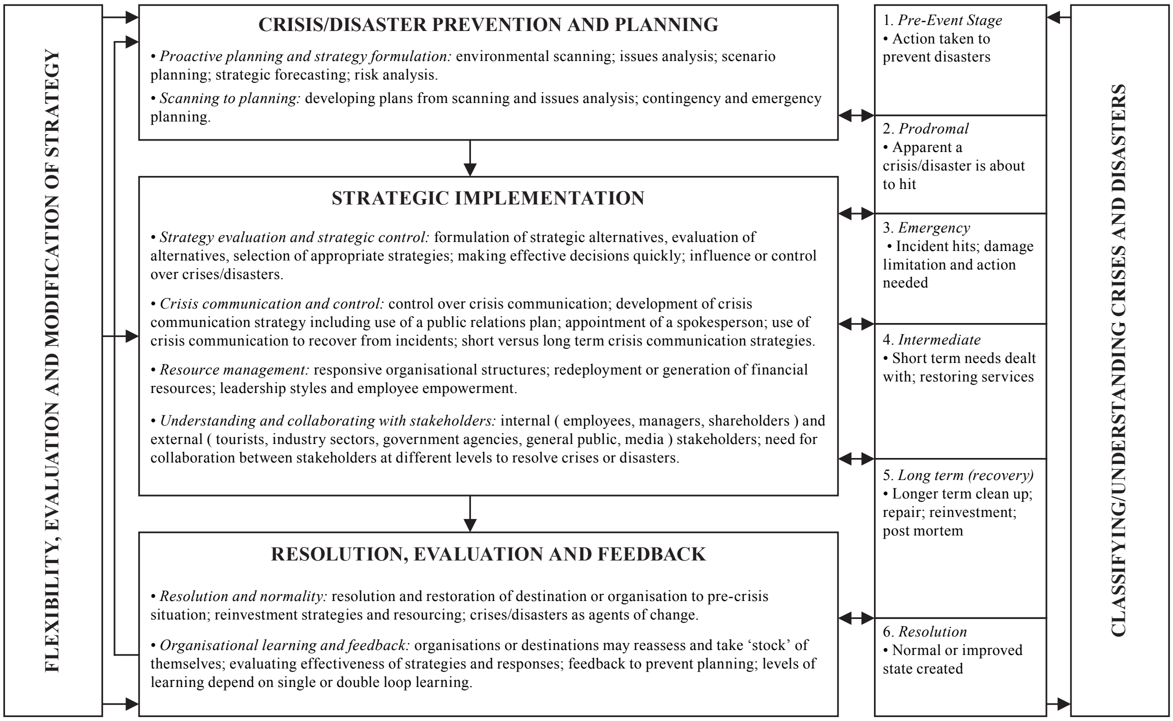

Figure 2 Crisis and disaster management: a holistic strategic approach
Source Ritchie (2004, p . 674).

- *Understanding and collaborating with stakeholders* is essential in order to successfully plan and manage crises in the tourism industry. The logic of this relationship lies in a strong interrelation between individuals and groups within the tourism industry, and their need to develop a successful strategy for resolving crises when they occur.

Resolution, Evaluation, and Feedback

Strategically speaking, the last phase takes place while the organization or destination are recovering from the crisis and returning to normal activities (Ritchie, 2004, p. 679). The improved state of an organization and a destination is possible only if the organization gains new knowledge from the crisis, changes its procedures and modifies strategies that have not proven to be effective; it is these actions that are pillars of the prevention and proactive planning (Ritchie, 2004, p. 679).

Crisis Communication and Crisis Communication Strategies

Communication is an extremely important instrument during all phases of crisis management. Therefore, it is of great importance to communicate through the media to accurately frame the crisis in the public perception (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 94). Crisis communication is the management of the perception of the reality that takes place, and it has the function of retelling the public what is happening (or what you want the public to know what is happening); essentially, crisis communication shapes public opinion (Fink, 2013, p. 8).

Many authors have written about the importance of crisis communication strategies (Pauchant and Mitroff, 1992; Coombs, 2007a, 2011; Crandall, Pranell & Spillane, 2010; Fink, 2013); however, Crandall, Pranell and Spillane (2010, p. 150) argue that an effective crisis communication strategy is necessary to successfully manage the crisis. Indeed, various crises require different crisis communication strategies; for this reason, organizations must, first of all, understand exactly in what kind of crisis it is possible to apply the appropriate crisis communication strategy (Fink 2013, p. 180). Via the conceptualization of the

phenomenon, Coombs (2006, 2007b, p. 170) proposes four strategies of crisis communication (three primary and one secondary) depending on the perception of responsibility for a crisis that has occurred:
Primary

1. *Denial*: frames the group of communication strategies which aims to prove the absence of a crisis or to separate all connections between the organization affected by the crisis and the crisis. Three tactics are used in the framework of this strategy: *Attacking the accuser*, *Denial* and the *Role of scapegoat*.
2. *Reduction*: is a communication strategy that is used when an organization accepts the existence of a crisis and when it tries to show that it has very little control over the crisis that has occurred. The tactics used on this occasion are *Excuse* and *Justification*.
3. *Reconstruction*: is a communication strategy that is used when an organization affected by a crisis attempts to rebuild its legitimacy and protect its reputation, while *Compensation* and *Apology* are two tactics used on this occasion.

Secondary

4. Bolstering: is a group of strategies that show the organization and its relationship with stakeholders in a positive light. When using *Bolstering* strategy, the tactics used are *Reminding*, *Ingratiation,* and the *Victim*.

Events That May Adversely Affect Cruise Tourism in Dubrovnik

Glaesser (2006, p. 16) defines a negative event as an incident within an organizational environment that can threaten, weaken and destroy the competitive advantages or significant goals of the organization. In many ways, this view of a negative event and its potential is reminiscent of Gleick's (1987) theory of chaos, in which the state of chaos can be explained as a phenomenon with a hidden pattern, whereby chaotic systems have sensitive connections with the initial state and are unpredictable in their outcome. Lorenz (1993) further notes how even a small change in the initial data input can lead to very different outcomes. He metaphorically calls this event the 'butterfly effect' and argues that the behaviour of chaotic systems cannot give long-term predictions but at best can only give accurate short-term forecasts. Several authors believe that the chaos theory is extremely useful for understanding complex systems, such as crisis events, because chaos theory views the world as a complex system of constant motion and change (Kiel, 1995; Morgan, 1997; Sellnow et al. 2002, see in Crandall, Pranell & Spillane, 2010).

In the spirit of the preceding, cruise tourism in Dubrovnik as a system has the characteristics of constant movement and change; therefore, it carries a certain level of predisposition to crises. Because of the specific aspects of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, negative events that may lead to a crisis are numerous, but most of them can be grouped into several types according to the cause: *terrorism* (state terrorism, bio-terrorism, religious terrorism, nuclear terrorism and cyber-terrorism); *political* (political instability, social unrest, the strengthening of ultra-right and ultra-left structures, a war in the region, relations between NATO and Russia (the crisis in Ukraine)); *economic* (stock market crash, inflation, currency fluctuations, recession and credit contractions); *health and epidemiological* (acute gastroenteritis caused by Norwalk virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Ebola, avian flu (H5N1) and Legionnaires disease) and *environmental* (elevated air temperature, sea pollution by wastewater from cruisers, a devastating magnitude earthquake (natural disaster), drought and air pollution by cruise ships).

Crisis Leadership

The concept of crisis leadership is based on 'thinking the unthinkable', where the 'unthinkable' is the event with an extremely low probability but with very high consequences, and the events that are leading up to the crisis (Mitroff, 2004, p. 14). Mitroff (ibid., p. 10) argues that *Crisis leadership* is a much more successful way to manage the crises because of its proactive character as opposed to *Crisis management,* which is essentially of a reactive nature as it deals with crises only after they occurred.

Characteristics of the leaders of *Crisis leadership*

In the first written scientific study on the strategies of war, von Clausewitz (1832) noted that, before each battle started, great military leaders like Napoleon

Bonaparte, first visualize what is needed to be accomplished in order to win, and then follow their intuition, adapting their activities along the way to the unexpected events they encounter (see in Pfeifer, 2013). George (2009), making a parallel between crises and wars, argues that both have very uncertain outcomes, which is why the generals and leaders of organizations during crises and wars are at the limits of their abilities while they are forced to use all their wisdom and courage to successfully move the organization out of the crisis, that is, to win the war.

During crises, the leaders are greatly tempted; indeed, Boin et al. (2005) observe that the success or failure of leaders depends on the results of their confrontation with five critical tasks: *giving a meaning to a crisis*; *decision making during a crisis*; *giving significance to a crisis*; *ending a crisis*; and *learning from a crisis*. Recognizing morals and lessons from previous crises is one of the most important features that separate the successful from the unsuccessful crisis leaders (George, 2009)

Characteristics of *Crisis leadership*

Lagadec (1993, p. 54) points out that success in managing the crises lies with the structures developed before the occurrence of the crisis. Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) state several features that adorn the organizations with *Crisis leadership;* they call those organization *Resilient organizations*. Such organizations are built on a well thought-out basis that lies on five fundamental principles being: *failure preoccupation, resistance to simplifying, sensitivity during activity, commitment to flexibility and respect for expertise* (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). The significance of flexibility in organizations that cultivate the culture of the *Crisis leadership* is seen by McCann and Selsky (2012). The main attributes of the organizations of *Crisis leadership* are: appropriateness, awareness, orientation towards action, resourcefulness, and connections (McCann & Selsky, 2012)

Strategies of *Crisis leadership*

After analysing many historical crises, Braden et al. (2004, p. 16), developed seven essential strategies of Crisis leadership, shown in Figure 3.

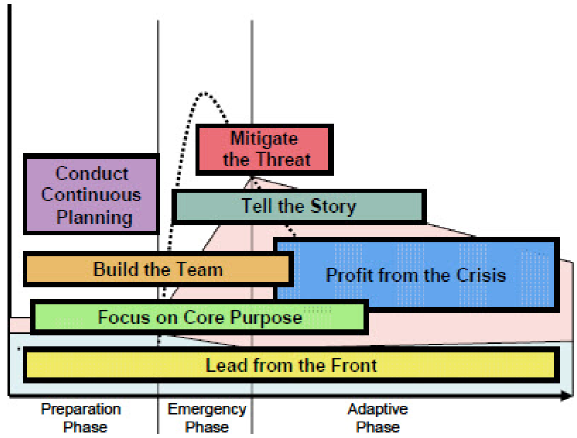

Figure 3 Strategies of crisis leadership
Source Braden et al. (2004, p. 17)

Strategies of Crisis leadership

Lead From the Front

During crises, people express a desire for a strong, reliable, and visibly engaged leader (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 86). At the very least, the leader of the Crisis leadership must be visible, balanced, brave, dedicated and attentive (Braden et al., 2004, p. 24); during the crisis, he must exhibit the following characteristics:

- *visibility and image* are what the most effective leaders (e.g. Winston Churchill, Lee Iacocca, Rudolph Giuliani) demonstrate during crises (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 87);
- *to demonstrate courage* is a very important aspect of being a leader, in which he/she continues to act despite feeling fear (Collins, 2003, p. 54);
- *to show commitment* is the ability of a leader to show his determination to carry out all the tasks in the work (Braden et al. 2004, p. 27);
- *to maintain perspective* is the ability of a leader not to lose the ultimate goal of his sight regardless of the phase of the cycle of crisis in which he is found (Braden et al., 2004, p. 27).

Focusing on Core Purpose

During his stay in Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps, Frankl (1985, p. 95) the creator of logotherapy, observed that people who have faith in a better future also have a greater chance of survival. Braden et al. (2004) summarize several key principles of this strategy:

- *know and understand core purpose*: happens when the leader of the *Crisis leadership* accepts that identifying the organization's higher purpose is of colossal importance because it provides the foundation for every decision and action within a crisis plan;
- *to instil value and align with reality*: it is the duty of a leader to close all gaps between organizational values, organizational behaviour and the reality in which the organization is (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004, see in Braden et al. 2004, p. 33);
- *to provide vision and embody values* is the instrument of unification that the leader uses to stabilize the employees of the organization during the crisis;
- *to consistently assess and update purpose* is when the leader updates the organization's higher purpose and values to ensure the relevance of the current and future environment (Braden et al., 2004).

Build the Team

In order to successfully survive the crisis, it is of great importance that a leader builds quality teams diagonally in and outside the organization, paying attention to:

- *nurturing relationship*: since the personal ties are structural elements of all teams;
- *internal team building*: is the process in which the leader provides feedback to employees during the crisis and in return gets an emotional connection from which he derives benefits such as loyalty, support, patience and cooperation of employees (Klann, 2003, p. 33);
- *external team building*: is the next step where a leader must not forget the external stakeholders of the organization (Braden et. al., 2004).

Conduct Continuous Planning

Continuous planning boils down to finding and executing a large number of decisions before a crisis occurs (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 36). Braden et al. (2004) distinguish the following processes of continuous planning:

- *identify risks and potential crises:* the environment is analysed, and the main risks in the operating environment are recognized and avoided (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 2);
- *establish and monitor sensors*: a necessary step for the simple reason that all crises send early warning signs;
- *develop a crisis action plan*: the process of the formation of the detailed document that provides a methodology for crisis management;
- *test the plan*: the obligation of a leader that should not be neglected under the influence of the assumption that untested crisis action plan works in reality as conceived and written on paper (Braden et. al., 2004).

Mitigate the Threat

Braden et al. (2004) recommend the following measures that lead to successful mitigation of a crisis:

- *take the action*: at the moment immediately after the impact of the crisis when the leader must identify the problem and determine the measures aimed at stabilizing the situation (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 67);
- *being on "scene"* is the responsibility of leaders sending a strong, clear message that they fully understand the seriousness of the situation (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 69);
- *consultation with a team expert*: is common when a leader is flooded by sensitive decisions because of which he needs help (Braden et. al., 2004).

Tell the Story

Effective communication is critical for leaders when framing the story in the perception of public opinion (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 94). In the framework of this strategy, Braden et al. (2004) state the following needs:

- *spokesman*: is a role that is at the position assigned to the leader who possesses inner discipline and balance;

- *timely and honest communication*: is essential to successful crisis management; a leader must promptly provide all available information (i.e. his message) must be truthful and accurate during the crisis (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 94);
- *shaping the message*: is the virtuosity of leaders during which they decide on a principled message that they want to convey through their stories (Braden et. al., 2004).

Profit From a Crisis

Strong links that were created during the early phase of the cycle of crisis become more accentuated as the crisis drags on; consequently, it is the duty of the leaders to take a step towards a rapid resolution of the crisis (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 80). Braden et al. (2004) provide the following tactical steps to end the crisis:

- *normalization of business*: beginning immediately after the leader pulled the organization from the danger zone;
- *learning from the crisis*: acting soon after the completion of the crisis; all participants in the crisis should distinguish what went well during the crisis and what did not, or what can be learned from the crisis (Harvard Business School Essentials, 2004, p. 114);
- *adjustment of the organization*: is the ideal opportunity for the leader to show the necessity of reinventing the organization itself and the danger of returning organizational operations to the *status quo* (Braden et. al., 2004).

Research Methodology

The aim of the research was to investigate the existence of crisis management within the stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik as well as the differences in the perception of negative events that may lead to a crisis in Dubrovnik cruise tourism. To fulfil the objective of the research it is necessary to answer the following questions:

1. Is there crisis management within the stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, and is there a readily appointed leadership (organizational philosophy, responsible person, and organizational structure) in crisis management within stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik?
2. Are there any differences (among stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik) in the perception of negative events that could lead to crises of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, regarding specific demographic variables including sex, age, level of education, occupation and the role of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik (cruise company - destination)?

In this paper, the author decided to use two paradigms: pragmatism and positivism, which are usually followed by quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection. The review of existing literature indicates that many authors have written specifically in tourism but not about crisis management in cruise tourism. The research strategy was based on an active research since the author, because of the nature of his work, is directly involved in cruise tourism and during the preparation of this work had the opportunity to observe social developments in cruise tourism, both on the ship and on land. In addition to the research, an established theory in order to better understand certain behaviours was used. A structured questionnaire enabled the author to collect quantitative data that were processed with descriptive statistics. In addition to the structured questionnaire, secondary data and personal observations of the author were also used. Archival research was also used in this study to acquire the necessary data from archived reports and documents. The time design of the research had a transversal character, and 'transversal studies mostly use a questionnaire as a strategy' (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Robson 2002, cited Saunders et al., 2009, p. 155). In this paper, the author used the 'quick snapshot' method to investigate certain phenomena in a given period. Using the obtained answers to the research questions, the authors' observations and the help of relevant literature, the author will present a strategic framework for the leadership of crisis management for small and medium stakeholders of Dubrovnik cruise tourism.

Research Results

After exponential growth, cruise tourism in Dubrovnik has consolidated and become an indispensable segment of tourism activities relying on a growing number of stakeholders in Dubrovnik. Although cruise tourism in Dubrovnik is located in the mature stage of the life cycle of the destination, crisis management, both as an abstract concept and in the full sense of the word, is still unknown to the vast majority of stakeholders.

Designing the Questionnaire and Statistical Methods

In this research, the author used a semi-structured questionnaire that is designed to provide with the data on the perception of negative events that could lead to a crisis in cruise tourism in Dubrovnik. The questionnaire also gave us information as to whether there is crisis management with stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik or whether there is leadership in crisis management with stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik. The questionnaire is designed under the strong influence of Henderson's (2007) typology of threats that can lead to crises in tourism but also under the influence of Beirman's (2003) and Lepp & Gibson's (2003) similar factors. Taking into account the work of the above-mentioned authors, the current geopolitical situation in the world, as well as the author's many years of experience with 14 cruise ships on which he worked as the head of the business unit, the author of this work, through dialogue with his colleagues in the cruise industry, and with his close acquaintances from the Dubrovnik cruise sector, decided on a questionnaire containing 25 adverse events that may lead to a crisis in cruise tourism in Dubrovnik. The negative events cited were grouped into five dimensions (*terrorism, political events, economic impact, health / epidemiological impacts and climate / environmental impacts*). The perception of individual adverse events was measured with a Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The total values of individual dimensions were obtained by summing the values of negative events within the specified dimensions.

The second part of the questionnaire used a Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to measure the agreement with the findings relating to the existence of crisis management and the degree of agreement with the statement whether there is leadership in the crisis management with stakeholders in cruise tourism in Dubrovnik.

The third part of the questionnaire was used to obtain the basic demographic characteristics of respondents. All quantitative data obtained through a structured questionnaire were analysed using the statistical software package SPSS 21. Descriptive data analysis was performed to determine the intensity of mean values and standard deviations of agreement with the statements of the respondents. After descriptive analysis of the data, there was a more intensive analysis using an independent t-test of mean values, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey post hoc test. Each dimension of the questionnaire has a minimum value of 5 points and a maximum value of 25 points.

The Sampling of Respondents and Collecting Data

The target population of this study were the leading Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, as well as employees in the Disney Cruise Line company. The research was quite challenging because Dubrovnik cruise tourism is extremely fragmented and broad; consequently, the author decided to include the leading tour operators who serve approximately 70% of the cruise companies, followed by the largest hotel chains in Dubrovnik, the tourism community of Dubrovnik, the Dubrovnik port authority, the city council, the well-known restaurants, a few guides as well as two professors from the local university (RIT). The author also thought it would be useful to include the representatives of the cruise industry, for which he chose the employees on the Disney Magic cruise ship who stayed on board during his visit to Dubrovnik. Taking into account the circumstances of the research, the author distributed 100 questionnaires in the period from 11 March 2015 to 10 April 2015. The first completed questionnaires were returned to the author on 13 March 2015; by 17 April 2015, a total of 76 completed questionnaires had been collected, which amounts to a 76% of the selected target population.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The obtained demographic data will provide a better understanding of the specificity of the sample when viewing the test results. Demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

The total sample consisted of 76 respondents, and the gender representation was fairly equal. The age

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

Demographic Variable	n	Valid%
Gender		
Male	42	55%
Female	34	45%
Age		
30-40	45	59%
41-50	18	23%
51+	13	18%
Cruise company vs Dubrovnik stakeholders		
Cruise company	24	32%
Dubrovnik stakeholders	52	68%
Level of Education		
High school (secondary school)	7	10%
Associate degree	21	28%
Bachelor's degree	28	36%
Master's degree and doctoral degrees	20	26%
Occupations		
Owner	4	6%
Executive	10	13%
Steering committee member	6	8%
Senior manager in business unit	18	24%
Junior manager in business unit	11	14%
Clerk in business unit	14	18%
Tourist guide	11	14%
Human resource/teacher/ professor	2	3%
Role within cruise tourism		
Cruise company	24	32%
The city council	3	4%
Human resource	2	3%
Port authority	2	3%
Restaurants	4	5%
Hoteliers	13	17%
Tour operators	10	13%
Tourism community	5	6%
Guides	13	17%

of the sample was dominated by a group made up of respondents aged 30-40 years. Dubrovnik stakeholders were represented with 68% in the sample, and the education level of respondents was evenly distributed except for respondents with secondary education, who were in the minority and account for only 10% of the sample. The sample broadly covered the occupations of respondents, so in Table 1 we note that the perceptions of senior managers, clerks, and executives of organizations are leading followed by junior managers with 14% and finally the owners with 6%. The role within cruise tourism of respondents reflected the current image of Dubrovnik cruise tourism, in that the cruise companies are represented with 32% of the respondents, followed by hoteliers and guides with 17% and tour operators with 13% of respondents.

The Existence of Crisis Management with Stakeholders of Dubrovnik Cruise Tourism

Table 2 is a clear indication of the fact that crisis management is very poorly represented among stakeholders of Dubrovnik cruise tourism; however, those respondents who claimed that their organizations have crisis management have also agreed that there is a crisis management leadership within their organizations.

Table 2 The existence of crisis management in cruise tourism stakeholders

The existence of crisis management	Yes	No
Cruise company		24
The city council	3	
Human resource	2	
Port authority	2	
Restaurants		4
Hoteliers		13
Tour operators		10
Tourism community		5

The existence of crisis management	Yes	No
Guides		13
Agreement with the statement about whether there is leadership in the crisis management		
Cruise company	Without answer	
The city council	Agree	
Human resource	Agree	
Port authority	Agree	
Restaurants	Without answer	
Hoteliers	Without answer	
Tour operators	Without answer	
Tourism community	Without answer	
Guides	Without answer	

Perceptions of Respondents on the Dimensions of Negative Events that Could Lead to a Crisis in Cruise Tourism in Dubrovnik

Table 3 Mean values of the perceived dimensions of negative events that may lead to crises of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik

Perceived dimensions of negative events	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Health / epidemiological	76	16.63	4. 86
Economic	76	15.48	3. 98
Climate / environmental	76	14.61	4. 21
Terrorism	76	18.64	4. 49
Political events	76	17.44	3. 98

From Table 3, it can be concluded that the respondents perceived the negative events clustered around the dimensions *Terrorism* (M = 18.64) to be the highest potential risk, while negative events grouped around *Climate / environmental* dimension were perceived as a threat with the lowest potential (M = 14.61). The highest mean value of the dimension *Terrorism* can be easily understood when taking into account the current circumstances in which terrorist attacks of all kinds have become a commonplace in media with extremely active reporting frequently using explicit pictures and videos. In contrast, the lowest mean value of *Climate / environmental* dimension can be explained by the low interest for understanding problems and by a low level of information of respondents on negative events clustered around *Climate / environmental* dimension.

The Ratio of Respondents' Perceptions on the Dimensions of Negative Events that May Lead to a Crisis in Cruise Tourism in Dubrovnik and Specific Demographic Variables

We obtained the answer to this research question using an independent t-test, variance analysis (ANOVA) and Tukey post hoc test. The results of the independent t-test showed only significant differences in the perception of negative events that may lead to a crisis in cruise tourism in Dubrovnik with a group of male and female respondents for the *Health / epidemiological* dimension. The male respondents had a higher value of mean values than the female respondents did. This data may be explained by the fact that male respondents were more common at higher managerial positions in this study, whereby they had the opportunity to come into contact with multiple sources of information and thus to develop a bolder perception of potential dangers hidden in the *Health / epidemiological* dimension.

The perception of negative events that may lead to crises with stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik is tested using the independent t-test and variance analysis (ANOVA); however, with the remaining groups of specific demographic variables, significant differences in the perception of negative events that may lead to operations crisis in cruise tourism in Dubrovnik were not observed.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the existence of crisis management within stakeholders of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik. Before addressing the potential dangers that are hidden behind the successful image of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik, it was of paramount importance to understand the general life cycle of a crisis, mainly because of the very delicate nature of the industry. A literature review on crisis management in tourism brings to our attention the fact that the main foci in crisis manage-

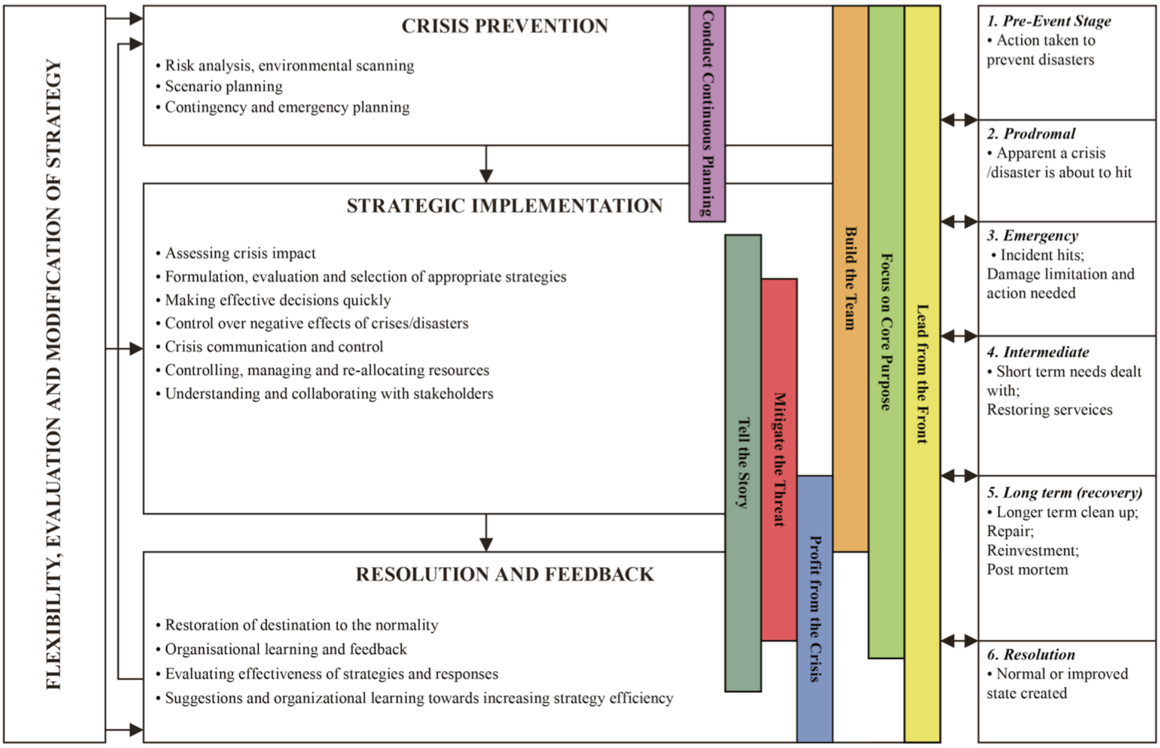

Figure 4 The strategic framework of leadership in crisis management for small and medium-sized cruise tourism stakeholders Dubrovnik

Source after Faulkner (2001, p. 144), Ritchie (2004, p. 674), Braden at el. (2004, p. 17), Rossi (2008, p. 11).

ment had reactive characteristics. The author of this paper understands that this type of management is very often an accepted reality; however, it is absolutely necessary to challenge this paradigm in order to understand that pro-active leadership is the key aspect of successful crisis management.

From this research, we determined that most of Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism do not have a developed system of crisis management and do not have developed leadership in crisis management either. Taking into account the information obtained in this study, the author's opinion is that it is crucial to offer a strategic framework of leadership in crisis management that could be used by small and medium-sized cruise tourism stakeholders in Dubrovnik. The proposed strategic framework shown in Figure 4 is derived from existing models developed by Faulkner (2001), Ritchie (2004), Braden et al. (2005) and Rossi (2008).

The proposed strategic framework for the leadership in crisis management for small and medium-sized cruise tourism stakeholders in Dubrovnik shown in Figure 4 was developed under the strong influence of Ritchie (2004) and Braden et al. (2004) whose models were described in detail and presented in Sections *Strategic framework of crisis management in tourism* and *Strategies of Crisis leadership.* Bearing in mind the importance of cruise tourism in Dubrovnik and the current turbulent context in which we live and in which tourism business activities take place, it is of decisive importance for Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism to place crisis management at the very core of their organizations. By developing leadership in crisis management as an organizational philosophy, appointing well-trained individuals with correct attitudes as crisis management leaders and placing a crisis management at the center of the organization itself, Dubrovnik stakeholders of cruise tourism would have the leadership in crisis management with all its pro-active properties. By adopting leadership in crisis management, small and medium-sized cruise tourism stakeholders in Dubrovnik can avoid many crises and, in the case of those that are inevitable, leadership in crisis management can achieve control and management when addressing the state of emergency, or a fast recovery and organizational learning at the end of the crisis.

It would be beneficial for future studies to investigate crisis management and especially leadership in crisis management in cruise companies and port of calls that have experienced negative events that lead to the crisis. In the case of the Carnival Corporation, a case study approach would be very valuable in determining the effectiveness of strategic frameworks and leadership concepts that were used during their crisis (induced by the Costa Concordia shipwreck). Another interesting study would be a critical analysis of crisis management strategies within stakeholders of Dubrovnik cruise tourism who are claiming that they have such strategies. It is hoped that this pioneering study of crisis management in cruise tourism will encourage further academic research due to the limited literature on this topic. It is also hoped that practitioners and managers in cruise tourism will recognize the benefits of leadership in crisis management and that they will welcome such approach. If the cruise tourism stakeholders embrace negative events that can lead to crisis and establish leadership in crisis management as part of their organizational culture, then they will be able to reduce potentially negative impacts on cruise tourism and the local communities in ports of call in general.

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Original Scientific Article

Relevance of the World Economic Forum Tourism Competitiveness Index for International Association Events: The Case of New EU Member States

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This paper focuses on the most lucrative type of tourism: business tourism, particularly association events and the effects of specific factors on the process of selecting destinations for these events. The research is based on various statistics to comprehensively establish a connection between association events and the international competitiveness of 13 countries that joined the EU in or after 2004. Even though they all vary in size, development and geographic location within Europe, the results show that the countries' economies and association events have a strong connection and that positive influences of this segment of tourism can be felt throughout the destinations.

Key words: Association events, international competitiveness, destination marketing organisations, new Europe

Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest industry (Donyadideh, 2013; Goutam Panigrahi, 2012), and international meetings and events represent one of its most lucrative segments, in addition to being considered global generators of added value (Kim et al., 2003) for participants and destinations alike. They increase the added value of tourism, generate revenue from business guests, diversify destination tourism services and facilities and, consequently, decrease destination seasonality (Davidson & Rogers, 2006; Rudež, Sedmak & Bojnec, 2013). The largest subcategory of business travel, meetings and events are association events. There is an entire industry dedicated to attracting, facilitating and organizing association events from hotels to meeting planners (Karin Weber, 2001).

Interestingly, this is not a well-researched field of tourism, and the purpose of this study was to offer an overview of research on association events on an international level. To do so, we chose to analyse the 13 countries that joined the European Union in or after 2004: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia were selected for comparison as they often compete for the same events and are frequently compared for geographical or historical reasons and are often referred to as the "New Europe" (Dunford, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2000). We will investigate the relevance of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), particularly its sub-indexes, in an attempt to link it to the association market.

Association Events, Destination Selection Process, Competitiveness and the ICCA Statistics

The competition for association events is fierce, as this is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative segments of the tourism industry (Chen, 2006, p. 167). The destination selection process can take several years, and organizers carefully compare and assess every element that each destination has to offer; consequently, destinations face tough competition with decisions depending on the smallest details (Richards, 2011; H. E. Chacko & Fenich, 2000). This process can take anywhere from one to several years. We wanted to see if there are other internationally comparable competitiveness factors apart from the general determining ones like logistics, accommodation and congress capacities (Sikosek, 2012) that we could use for our research. The destination selection process usually begins with international associations publishing tenders for the organisation of their future events. The success of an event is crucial for the future development of the association and can have major benefits for the destination (Crouch & Brent Ritchie, 1997). Given that destinations are recognized as the primary unit of analysis in tourism research and have been well researched (Line & Runyan, 2014; Pike & Page, 2014; Davidson & Keup, 2012; Pike, Murdy & Lings, 2010), one option would be to look at the destination marketing organisations (DMOs). These play a major role in promoting their destinations with associations, working with the local association chapters and obtaining financial subsidies for international events (Morrison, 2013). That is why the bigger the event is, the more assistance is expected from the national or local DMO (Wang, 2008). This is often crucial in the destination selection process (Crouch & Brent Ritchie, 1997, p. 63) but no comparable information has been found as assistance is not always made public. An additional problem is also that the term 'DMO' includes tourist boards, convention and visitor bureaus, and a number of other organisations dedicated to leisure and business travels and which are usually fully or partly governmental institutions attempting to cover all the different segments of tourism that are relevant to a destination (Zavattaro & Adams, 2015; Pike & Page, 2014).

Authors researching business travel agree that the number of publications in the field is quite limited, especially in the context of its global financial impact (Beaverstock & Budd, 2013; Lyons, 2013; Faulconbridge, Beaverstock, Derudder & Witlox, 2009). Business travel, including association and corporate meetings and events, even lacks a clear definition. It has often been described by the abbreviation MICE, which stands for meetings, incentives, congresses, and events or exhibitions (Vanneste, 2008; Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Lawrence & McCabe, 2001). Some use the abbreviation SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal events) (Davidson & Rogers, 2006), others break it down to meetings (e.g. conferences, symposiums, board meetings, and committee meetings), business events (tradeshows, sales training, product launches, customer events, and incentives) and social events (weddings, reunions, and civic and community events) (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Association events cover all these definitions.

The process of international destination selection for association events is also not academically well documented or researched (Crouch, 2004; Jun & McCleary, 1999). Crouch and Brent Richie (1997) have set a model for researching site selection factors, which has been used as a backbone of later research focusing on the site level (Draper, Dawson & Casey, 2011; Fawzy & Samra, 2008; Todorović & Završnik, 2002) and city level (Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Nelson & Rys, 2000; Upchurch, Jeong, Clements & Jung, 2000). As far as the country level in reference to association events is concerned, research is more limited and is clearly focused on the predominantly financial aspect of the industry value for a specific country, following the guidelines set by the World Tourism Organisation Satellite report (Zhang, 2014; VisitDenmark, 2012; World Tourism Organization, 2006; Baskey, Ross, Patel, Wittman & Daniel, 2008). However, no research was found comparing different countries in reference to the meetings industry.

Competitiveness

In recent years, competitiveness has become an increasingly significant topic, and there is substantial academic literature analysing different aspects of travel and tourism competitiveness. The term itself is primarily related to international competitiveness followed by that of the industry level and firm level (Bhawsar & Chattopadhyay, 2015). In the case of tourism research, the primary focus has been on the industry level nationally, regionally or locally; therefore, we predominately see implementation empirical surveys focusing on subjective consumer measures (Sedmak & Kociper, 2013) or complex mathematical models (Barros et al., 2011).

If local suppliers connect with each other and start cooperating with DMOs, they can increase their competitiveness and, by adopting digital media, they can reach their desired markets for promoting their destination product (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013; Vodeb, 2012; Buhalis, 2000; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Of course, all this reflects the overall competitiveness of a country; here, we can find several examples using the WEF competitiveness reports, such as in a comparison of the 25 top world destinations (Balan, Balaure & Veghes, 2009) and Brazil and Switzerland (Montanari, Giraldi & Campello, 2014). An enquiry of the relationship between research and development (R&D) and competitiveness of South East Europe (SEE) economies has been conducted by Radosevic (2009) although he uses the WEF International competitiveness index, he does look at all of the new member states. It bears mentioning that the WEF was a relevant source for benchmarking country competitiveness in 1979 and captures both the microeconomic and macroeconomic foundations of national competitiveness (Bhawsar & Chattopadhyay, 2015).

With the historic EU enlargement in 2004, ten new member states with the combined population of 75 million citizens joined a community of 15 pre-existing members: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta, which are all very similar yet very different (Coles & Hall, 2005). Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, and Croatia followed in 2013. These 13 member states are the subject of our research, and we can refer to them as New Europe. We will not use the term Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), as it excludes Cyprus and Malta (Hughes & Allen, 2009; Hall, 1999).

By entering the EU and some also the Schengen zone, these states opened their door to European tourism and business. As tourism continues to grow globally and represents a significant source of income for national, regional and local economies, efforts have intensified on the country level to understand the role of DMOs in the international meetings and events market.

Despite the importance and interest of the sector, there are only very scarce sources of statistical information that would be dealing with the segment of international meetings and events at an international level. For this reason, we also decided to use the WEF Travel Competitiveness Index, which has three sub-indexes, which were used in the analysis. The sub-indexes are:

- Travel and tourism regulatory framework (includes the factors of regulation and politics referring to the environmental sustainability, security, health and safety and prioritisation of tourism). For this sub-index, we will use the abbreviation REG.
- Business environment and infrastructure (referring to the factors of air transport infrastructure, public transport infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, ICT infrastructure and price competitiveness in tourism and travel). For this sub-index, we will use the abbreviation BUS.
- Travel and tourism human, cultural and natural resources (includes, in addition to the human and natural resources, the issue of cultural affinity for tourism and travel). For this sub-index, we will use the abbreviation HR.

It is important to note here that each of these three pillars is calculated as an average of the values that compose them.

ICCA Statistics

The International Congress and Convention Association was founded in 1963 and currently has almost 100 member organisations worldwide. It focuses on tracking association events globally.

In 2010, the ICCA began linking its database of association meeting profiles with the profiles of the Union of International Associations (UIA). The ICCA database only includes events that have at least 50 participants, are organized on a regular basis (one-time events are not included) and rotate between at least three different countries.

The association database provides a historical overview of each meeting, creating a complete record of accomplishment of where it was held in the past and the destinations that have been chosen for the future (ICCA n.d.).

Research Question Development

The extent of support and preconditions for association events varies and is related to the destinations' dedication to attracting these events in the national tourist and political agenda. However, we assume that associations would prefer destinations with stable economies, local association chapters or the potential to open one. These elements should be reflected in the WEF TTCI indexes. We aim to explore whether the analysed sub-indexes (Regulatory Framework; Business Environment; Human, Cultural and Natural Resources) are connected to the number of events in the selected countries.

As Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia all met the criteria to enter the EU, thus boosting the interest from international associations to hold events there, can we assume that the difference between them is in their ability to realize the hosting of these events?

Research Question 1: **The number of international events in a country can be indicated by WEF Travel Competitiveness sub-indexes.**

The countries joining the EU in or since 2004 all had similar economic baselines. As those countries have been developing recently, reflected in their GDP growth, they would also have improved their attractiveness as a destination for association events, which would be reflected in improved WEF indexes. Can we, therefore, find evidence of GDP growth and improvement in the sub-indexes increased the number of international events? Additionally, are there any differences among the countries observed that would explain the changes in the number of international events and WEF Travel Competitiveness sub-indexes in the observed periods (2007–2013)?

Research Question 2: **Number of international events reflects a country's growth in GDP and WEF Travel Competitiveness sub-indexes.**

Method

The first challenge was data collection. The main problem was that countries collect different data about tourism, so we were not able to find sufficiently comparable information referring solely to association events. Several associations collect data about association events through member organisations, such as European Cities Marketing (ECM), the Union of International Associations (UIA), Meeting Professional International (MPI), and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). They all collect different types of information that are only accessible to members or based on a special authorisation. The data we looked for is collected by the ICCA, and we were able to acquire it with the help of the Ljubljana Tourism Convention Bureau. Therefore, without their help, this research would not have been possible.

From the ICCA database, we acquired data that refers to the number of events and number of different locations in each country where events took place and individually in the time range from 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2013.

GDP information per country was taken from Eurostat (2015).

For the analysis, we used SPSS Statistic 21. Our first step was an exploratory data analysis and sample investigation, which concluded that the data is suitable for correlation and regression analyses.

For the testing of the first hypothesis, we used correlation analysis, specifically the Pearson correlation coefficient (1-tailed). Firstly, the number of events per 1 billion euros of GDP was calculated. This information was then correlated with the three WEF TTCI sub-indexes.

To test the second hypothesis, we used multiple linear regression. In our model, the dependent variable was expressed as the percentage change per 1 billion euros of GDP between 2007 and 2013. The independent variables included the percentage change in the three sub-indexes and GDP compound annual growth rate (CAGR) based on the data from Eurostat. The CAGR calculation included GDP at current prices expressed in billions of euros for 2007 and 2013.

As the values we were getting were interesting, we decided to perform a cluster analysis of the observed countries based on the index values of the two variables. The first variable was the number of events per billion-euro GDP in 2007 and 2013.The second variable was the two sub-indexes' regulatory frameworks and business environment from the same two years. Then, we looked at the values of variables and compared them across segments.

Findings and Discussion

For the first research question, we calculated the correlations between the number of events in individual countries per billion euros and the three WEF sub-indexes. The analysis concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between the number of events per billion euros of GDP in 2007 with the Regulatory Framework and Business Environment sub-indexes, both at the $p< 0.01$ significance level. Similarly, for 2013 we found a statistically significant correlation between some events per billion euros of GDP in 2013 and Regulatory Framework ($p< 0.01$) and Business Environment ($p< 0.01$). For both 2007 and 2013, no statistically significant correlation was found for the Human, Cultural and Natural Resources sub-index.

Therefore, we can partially confirm the first research question, establishing that there is a statistical correlation between the number of events and two out of three WEF sub-indexes. We can, therefore, assess that higher values in these WEF Travel Competitiveness sub-indexes correlates with higher numbers of association events for the countries observed. Although small, the sample works in the countries that differ in size, development and geographical location within Europe.

Table 1 Correlations between the number of events per billion euros of GDP and WEF sub-indexes.

	Events per billion euro of GDP 2007	Events per billion euro of GDP 2013	WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2007	WEF Sub index Business Environment 2007	WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2007	WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2013	WEF Sub index Business Environment 2013	WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2013
Events per billion euro of GDP 2007	1	.951**	.625*	.715**	0.367	.764**	.837**	0.104
Events per billion euro of GDP 2013	.951**	1	.564*	.735**	0.39	.728**	.842**	0.091
WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2007	.625*	.564*	1	.755**	.658**	.878**	.681**	0.352
WEF Sub index Business Environment 2007	.715**	.735**	.755**	1	.688**	.845**	.914**	0.387
WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2007	0.367	0.39	.658**	.688**	1	.485*	.665**	.697**

	Events per billion euro of GDP 2007	Events per billion euro of GDP 2013	WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2007	WEF Sub index Business Environment 2007	WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2007	WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2013	WEF Sub index Business Environment 2013	WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2013
WEF Sub index Regulatory framework 2013	.764**	.728**	.878**	.845**	.485*	1	.802**	0.312
WEF Sub index Business Environment 2013	.837**	.842**	.681**	.914**	.665**	.802**	1	0.396
WEF Sub index Human, Cultural and Natural resources 2013	0.104	0.091	0.352	0.387	.697**	0.312	0.396	1
N	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

For the second research question, multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the change in the number of events from 2007 to 2013, based on the change in sub-indexes and GDP. No significant regression equation was found ($F (4.8) = 0.965$, $p = 0.476$), with an $R^2=0.326$. Equally, none of the regression coefficients was found to be statistically significant.

Therefore, we can conclude that the relative change in sub-indexes and GDP cannot explain the changes in the number of international events for the observed countries.

The multiple regression model consisted of:

– Predictors: (Constant), Relative change in sub-index HR (from 2007 to 2013), GDP_CAGR (compounded annual growth rate from 2007 to 2013), Relative change in sub-index Business Environment (from 2007 to 2013), Relative change in sub-index REG (from 2007 to 2013)
– Dependent Variable: Relative change in number of events (defined as percentage change from 2007 to 2013)

Given that our model showed that the difference in the number of international events throughout the 2007–2013 period could not be explained by GDP growth and changes in the WEF indexes, our purpose is to find meaningful differences between the countries that could explain their specific development.

We have split the sample of our countries into three clusters, based on the number of association events in 2013 per billion euros of GDP (BN GDP) and the value of WEF sub-indexes (Regulatory and Business). Based on key development indicators and event statistics, we can further examine differences among them and answer the second research question.

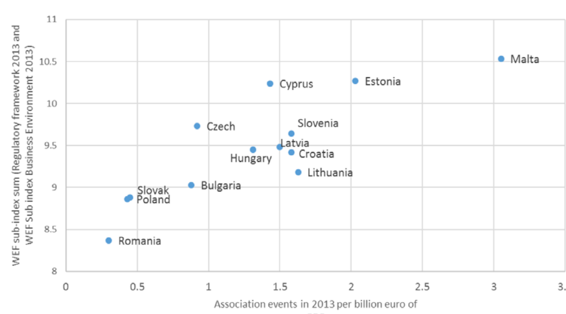
Through our analysis, we have ended up with three groups depending on the GDP and number of events. The first group, consisting of Slovakia, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria, all have less than one event in 2013 per BN GDP. Low WEF index values show the relatively lower level of development, which

Table 2 Number of events per billion euros of GDP per country

Country	EVENTS PER BILLION EURO OF GDP 2013	INDEX SUM 2013
Bulgaria	0.88	9.03
Romania	0.3	8.37
Latvia	1.5	9.48
Poland	0.43	8.89
Malta	3.05	10.53
Croatia	1.58	9.42
Lithuania	1.63	9.18
Czech Republic	0.92	9.73
Slovenia	1.58	9.64
Estonia	2.03	10.27
Cyprus	1.43	10.24
Hungary	1.31	9.45
Slovakia	0.45	8.88

Table 3 Cluster analysis and OLAP analysis, breakdown of segments.

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Total
	Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania, Croatia	Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, Poland, Romania	Cyprus, Estonia, Malta	
Events per billion euro of GDP 2007	1.19	0.5	2.59	1.35
Events per billion euro of GDP 2013	1.28	0.54	2.17	1.32
Sub index Regulatory framework 2007	4.66	4.08	5.11	4.63
Sub index Business Environment 2007	3.95	3.39	4.44	3.93
Sub index Regulatory framework 2013	5.1	4.83	5.46	5.12
Sub index Business Environment 2013	4.3	3.92	4.89	4.35



Graph 1 Number of events per GDP, graphic interpretation

marks them as not as attractive for international association events. Romania and Bulgaria are the two poorest EU member states.

The second group, including the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Latvia, Hungary, Croatia, and Lithuania, is positioned somewhere in the middle, both in WEF indexes and number of association events. The destinations in this group are all well positioned in the association market, and all find themselves in the largest group.

The third group consists of Cyprus, Malta and Estonia, with high WEF indexes and a high number of events per billion euros of GDP, which seem to be the most attractive for the association events. Of the three, Malta is an especially strong destination. We can link this to good infrastructure, good flight connections, and favourable weather conditions in the time of the conference season as well as not having the image of an eastern European country, together with Cyprus and in contrast most of other destinations in this research. The three countries in this group are also known for favourable tax policies, and this could be of interest to further future research.

Conclusions and Further Research

This paper presents a preliminary secondary study of various international statistics that measure different aspects of national economies. By combining data about GDP, travel and tourism competitiveness and the number of association events, we were able to confirm the existence of strong connections between some of them. Through cluster analysis, we have identified groups of countries with similarities in the relation between the number of international events and GDP. This paper shows that despite differences between countries, national legislation and strong business presence can attract additional association events, which further strengthens national economies.

Despite the failure to prove a direct correlation between the differences in GDP, the three WEF TTCI sub-indexes and the number of association events in a seven-year period, the research has opened various questions. A further collection of data and analysis focusing on comparable data over a longer period could perhaps reveal specific emerging patterns. Unfortunately, the WEF does not perform this analysis on a yearly basis and only the years that were included in the research were usable. The analysed period has been marked by a strong anomaly caused by the global economic crisis and austerity measures, which have strongly affected the countries concerned and the willingness of associations to venture to new European destinations. However, the results still indicate a strong connection between the economy and association meetings, and show that the effects of this lucrative segment of tourism can be felt in the analysed destinations.

The research can thus serve DMOs and tourism companies in lobbying and persuading local governments to pass legislation that will strengthen the competitiveness of their destinations.

The present research could be extended in the future to focus on the two indexes; more countries could also be included. A major issue of the research was the size of the sample, but this can be corrected in the future by analysing the entire EU or the world.

The research can serve as a foundation for the creation of an extended site selection model and the inclusion of country level elements into it. Potentially, it could even reveal systemic weaknesses within countries or even regions. This would allow for the planning and creation of more attractive, rational and sustainable destinations for association events on the national scale.

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Original Scientific Article

An Integrated Approach to the Development of Tivoli Park Competitiveness

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The purpose of this research is to analyse the facilities and services of Tivoli Park, its cultural heritage, and natural endowments. Using a quantitative method with structured interviews, 120 interviews with park visitors, who were also residents of the city of Ljubljana, were carried out. The findings suggest that the park has many elements that are not part of the integrated services of the park and, as such, appeal to a very broad range of visitors. Tivoli Park has two aspects: sports and recreation, and culture and nature. New development should include promenade concerts, performances by small vocal and musical groups, and art and photography workshops. Events and thematic trails should reflect new landscape design trends. One of the most significant challenges is the integration of communication technologies and sustainable park development. All stakeholders, cooperating in an interdisciplinary approach, should create a comprehensive Tivoli Park landscape park management plan.

Key words: tourism, park, sustainable development, cultural heritage, protected area

Introduction

Tivoli Park is classified as a landscaped park. In their study on the possibility of developing landscape parks in Slovenia, Plut et al. (2008) found that they have greater possibilities for activities such as education, recreation, tourism and agriculture, and medium-level development possibilities for activities such as research, forestry and other economic activities. Landscape parks offer opportunities that are mainly tied to local sources (e.g. agriculture, tourism, recreation), for those who are directly related to the park (supervision, guided tours, park management, services connected to the park facilities, etc.), as well as for those who profit from the park (additional farming activities, diverse tourist services, recreational activities etc.) (Gosar et al., 2010). Despite its basis in law, the cultural aspects of the wider protected areas are rarely taken into account, and it would be necessary to identify and highlight those aspects of tangible and intangible cultural heritage that have development potential (Hribar, Šmid Hribar & Erhartič, 2011). Kus Veenvliet and Sovinc (2008) and Plut et al.

(2008) point out that it is essential to include cultural heritage and its (tourism) development potential in wider protected areas in addition to nature conservation. Establishing tourism and catering activities in heritage buildings largely has no beneficial impact. Due to the development of additional activities nearby, they are a threat to the immediate surroundings. As a result, mansions and manors utilized for tourism represent the greatest threat to the interests of the garden and artistic heritage. Best practices elsewhere have shown that the major revitalizations are those that bring additional cultural value such as museums, galleries, music & theatre, and other elements, that enhance the attractiveness of the buildings but have less impact on the landscaped environment (Ogrin, 1995). Integrating heritage into tourism, and creating models based on heritage requires strategic design and technical decisions (Bogataj, 1992). The Slovene Tourism Development Strategy 2012–2016 does not devote particular attention to landscape or urban parks, but defines them as protected natural areas of Slovenia. Slovenian park tourist services and facilities can be joined to integrated products that enable tourism activities for a short (one-day) or longer (several days) holiday. The Cultural Tourism Development Strategy of Slovenia 2007–2013 stated that the development of the city can also be measured by the level of conservation, programme development and its attitude towards green areas (Lebe et al., 2009). It includes urban parks, tree-lined avenues, lawns in residential areas and city centres, green belts by railway and bus stations, as well as green areas in private ownership, such as gardens and groves around residential and commercial buildings. A systematic programme of revitalizing social and cultural events in parks as specific tourist services is the correct way of including urban green areas into tourism services. A systematic recovery programme could only be implemented in cooperation with different professions and other stakeholders. Stakeholders in tourism are directly and indirectly related individuals and groups coming from the public, private and civil sectors (Uran & Juvan, 2009).

Tivoli Park

The Landscape Park of Tivoli, Rožnik, and Šiškenski hill can be broken down into three zones: the landscaped zone of the urban park (Tivoli), the forested zone (Rožnik and Šišenski Hill), and the zone between Koseze and Brdo. Each zone has a distinctive appearance, providing different ways of experiencing nature and leisure and offering a variety of habitats for plants and animals (Smrekar, Erhartič & Šmid Hribar, 2011). Tivoli Park is unlike the forested urban parkland and is the most visited portion of the landscape park; it already hosts several activities or events. A 2010 survey (Smrekar et al., 2011) notes that over 1,750,000 visitors visit the landscape park of Tivoli, Rožnik, and Šišenski Hill every year. Most visitors to the landscape park enter through Tivoli, via an underpass beneath the railway line in front of the Jakopič Promenade. The survey also showed that walking was the main form of recreation in the park, practiced by 73% of visitors.

Tivoli Park evolved gradually, first as a tree-lined avenue; later, Žiga Zois opened his garden to the public in 1835. The park was created; in the 1950s, Radetzky encouraged horticultural activities and eventually the city took over the park. The name Tivoli initially came from the "summer residence" of Ljubljana's Kazin/Casino Society of Podturn Mansion, and later the mansion itself. In 1848, the name Tivoli was given to the tree-lined avenue; in the second half of the 19th century renovated parts of the Podturn and Cekin mansions were added. Podturn Mansion was also renamed Tivoli Mansion, and newly established Švicarija (Swiss Cottage) was renamed the Hotel Tivoli in 1908 (Ovsec, 1994).

The park's historical development is directly linked to city growth and the formation of the first dedicated green spaces that began in the 13th century, when the so-called Turjak Gardens of Count Auersperg, with Tivoli's western side bordering the Roman moat of Emona. On the east side, the park stretched almost to the Holy Trinity Church (Vardjan, 1994). Garden ornaments were mentioned at Podturn Fortress in 1267 (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). The author adds that the mansion was, later, frequently rebuilt, and in the 17th century was given a pond, trails, and beds, which later became the basis for future landscaping in front of the mansion.

In one of the oldest plans of Ljubljana, Martin Stier, builder of defensive fortifications in the first half of the 17th century, made a remarkably accurate sketch of the Auersperg gardens with its distribution of footpaths and areas of rectangular shapes in the Baroque style (Vardjan, 1994). At the end of the 18th century, Žiga Zois opened his gardens. The Tivoli and Cekin mansions were the main buildings in the park, with a major tree-lined avenue as the park's axis (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). The first attempt by the town to grant public access between the Tivoli and Cekin Mansions dates back to around 1808. The most important, and also the first integrated designs for the park, were created during the period of the Illyrian Provinces, when in 1813, the French engineer Jean Blanchard planned the arrangement of three tree-lined avenues between the two Baroque mansions and the town centre. In 1815, these avenues were conceived as the parks' essential skeleton (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). Later the park was awarded public status (Ordinance on the proclamation of Tivoli, Rožnik and Šišenski Hill natural heritage, 1984). Originally these were robinia and poplar trees, which in 1822 were replaced by chestnut trees and avenues named Latterman avenues (Pergovnik Cotič,2009).

The gardens at Tivoli Mansion were laid out in 1835 (Kolšek in Hajós, 2004). The tree-lined avenues are preserved to this day and have become the basis for all subsequent landscape architecture on which the urban public park design has been based. In 1852, a large central staircase with sculptures of dogs was added to the front of the mansion, landscaped with bushes and a round pool with fountain and fence, accentuated by cast iron vases (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). These bold and modern initiatives were spoiled due to the diversion of the Southern Railway through the Tivoli lawns in 1857. Almost a third of the park on the city side was changed and closed off; the railway line cut the tree circle and intersection of the Latterman Avenue in half (Vardjan, 1994).

In the second half of the 19th century, the park was wholly owned by the city (Mihelič, 1989). Later, the park was arranged with new avenues; in 1880 a pond was excavated; in 1894 a city boathouse and nurseries added. With the erection of the Jakopič Pavilion (between the train tracks and Latterman Avenue), designed in 1908 by Maks Fabiani, the park began to change radically. Complex park designs began to emerge among the avenues, the first being Jakopič Pavilion, north of Latterman Avenue and another two on the south side of the avenue and pond. The first design for a circular garden was created with the apparent involvement of Fabiani and Hejnic; the other two were created from preserved, carefully drawn and coloured illustrations by Hejnic, dated 1926 (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009).

The image of Tivoli changed in the period between the world wars, a significant part due to the designs of architect Prof. Jože Plečnik. This period represents the transformation of Tivoli towards sport, large-scale exhibitions and construction of new buildings. The central Jakopič Promenade leading to Tivoli Mansion was established between 1921 and 1934 (Vardjan, 1994). Pergovnik Cotič (2009) states that the avenue was replaced by a promenade in 1933, a wide sandy area with curbs, benches and concrete lighting along the middle. A triangular park with a children's playground and a fountain set between the rail tracks was created, following plans by Plečnik. More changes were made to the park in 1942, when, according to plans by architect Boris Kobe, the pond was transformed into a playground, thus removing one of Hejnic's designs (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). In the subsequent period, the park underwent predominantly negative transformations, the Jakopič Pavilion was demolished in 1962, a recreation area comprising Hala Tivoli hall and a swimming pool was added to the northern part of the park in 1960. The climax was the completion of the new Prešeren Road, which severed Plečnik's promenade (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009). Korošec (1991) states that the Hala Tivoli sports hall completely overshadowed the (former) People's Revolution Museum and the National Liberation Museum, a degradation of the former greatness of the presence of Cekin Mansion. The only contribution in the last fifty years was made in 1994, when the municipality organized a competition for proposals to the playground area, nurseries and park boathouse redesigned for public use (Pergovnik Cotič, 2009).

Research Problem and Methodology

The aim of this research, based on causal non-experimental methods, is to analyse visitor satisfaction with Tivoli Park's current facilities and services and its aspirations for the future. The sample was made up of 120 visitors to Tivoli Park, all residents of Ljubljana for at least one year before the interview. The interviewees were older than 15 years of age; the survey included 51 men and 69 women with different levels of academic achievement. More than a third (36.7%)

of respondents were university educated, followed by respondents with secondary education (29.2%); less than one-tenth had completed a master's degree, ten respondents had vocational bachelor qualifications, or 8.3%. Other respondents had vocational diplomas (7.5%), vocational secondary (5.8%) and elementary school education (3.3%).

Tivoli Park is unlike the forested parts (Rožnik and Šiška Hill) of the urban park, with higher visitor numbers and hosting several activities or events. As a part of the landscape park, Tivoli has the greatest number of existing buildings, monuments and garden sculptures, which significantly contribute or could contribute to developing a comprehensive range of tourism facilities and services. Tivoli is different from the forested areas landscape parks, in that it is arranged as a park, and, therefore, more suitable for the performance of activities or events.

In this study, we, therefore, wanted to know the opinions of visitors to Tivoli Gardens in relation to the existing park facilities. The research questions are:

– *satisfaction with the (current) services and facilities* (Are visitors satisfied with the services and facilities? Are visitors satisfied with the catering? Are outdoor exhibitions perceived to be an interesting form of park services?);
– *the frequency of park visits and the element of the park services* (How often do you visit the park? How often do you enjoy attending activities/events? How often do you view the exhibitions displayed on the Jakopič Promenade?);
– *motives for visiting the park* (What is the most common motive for your visit? What do you most often visit in the park?);
– *awareness of the park* (Where do visitors most often receive information about events/updates? Do visitors feel that they get enough information about events/updates in the park?);
– *wishes for park services* (Can you list three activities or events that you would like in the park? What would be important for you to be included as a park service/event?).

Based on the research problem and research questions, we have developed five hypotheses:

– *There are no gender differences in the frequency of visiting the park;*
– *Education of respondents does not affect the motive for visiting the park;*
– *Park visitors are satisfied with the facilities and services;*
– *Between age groups, there is no difference in satisfaction with the catering services;*
– *There is no difference in satisfaction with information about the event /updates in the park between the sexes.*

Fifteen closed-ended questions were statistically analysed, and 11 open-ended handwritten questions categorized. The statistical methods used were frequency tables and achi-square test. The aim of our research is to determine the opinions of visitors to Tivoli Park's facilities and services, and the opinion of visitors to each element of the facilities and services. Several illustrative results are presented (frequency table), while others are shown in relation to different categories, meaning whether they indicate differences in the responses between different groups (testing the null hypothesis with chi-square test).

Results and Interpretation

In this study, we wanted to know how frequently respondents visited Tivoli Gardens. As shown in Table 1, almost one third of visitors visit the park several times a week, followed by visitors who visit the park several times a year (28.3%), and more than a fifth visit the park several times a month. A tenth of the respondents visit the park daily, with 4.2% visiting once a year or less. It was predicted that there would be respondents who visit the park on a daily basis, but we did not expect such a large number of respondents that visit the park several times a week.

Table 1 The frequency of park visits

The frequency of park visits	f	f %
Daily	13	10.8%
Several times a week	39	32.5%
Several times a month	26	21.7%
Several times a year	34	28.3%

The frequency of park visits	f	f %
Once a year or less	5	4.2%
Other	3	2.5%
Total	120	100%

Source authors

Table 2 relates to our first hypothesis, which is that there are no gender differences in the frequency of park visits. The resulting χ^2 value of 4.07 is above the critical value for 1 degree of freedom (3.841 at 5 per cent risk). Chi-squared is statistically significant, so gender differences in the frequency of visiting the park are definite. The difference is due to the difference in (visit) patterns, since nearly two-thirds of women visit the park as often as every day, or several times a week, while more than half of the men visit the park every day or several times a week.

Table 2 The frequency of park visits by gender

Gender		The frequency of park visits by gender		Total
		Daily, several times a week	Other	
Women	f	24	45	69
	f%	34.8%	65.2%	100%
Men	f	28	23	51
	f%	54.9%	45.1%	100%
Total	f	52	68	120
	f%	43.3%	56.7%	100%

Source authors

The data in Table 3 shows that almost half of the respondents stated walking to be their main motive, a fifth most frequently visited park for relaxation, followed by those respondents who come to the park for recreation (10.8%). Given that the park has (well) prepared paths (offering some activities and events) and that interviewed visitors were strolling, we anticipated 'Walking' to be a frequently stated response. We did not predict that such a large number of respondents would select "Transit" as their main motive.

Table 3 The motive for visiting the park

The reason for visiting the park	f	f%
Walking	57	47.5%
Relaxation	20	16.7%
Recreation	13	10.8%
Transit	9	7.5%
Nature	5	4.2%
Children's playground	3	2.5%
To tour the park	3	2.5%
Other	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Source authors

Table 4 relates to our second hypothesis that the education of the respondents does not affect the motive for visiting the park. The value of the χ^2 test of 0.6 and is below the critical value by 1 degree of freedom (3.841 at 5 per cent risk). Chi-squared is not statistically significant, so we keep the hypothesis. We generalized results to the sample, and the data define difference as more than half of visitors from high school, a university degree and a master's degree visiting the park for a walk with more than half of the respondents with lower education visiting the park for other motives (Table 4).

Table 4 The motive of the visit according to the education

Education		Visiting motive		Total
		Walking	Other motives	
ES,VS, SS, College*	f	24	31	55
	f%	43.6%	56.4%	100%
HS, UE, MD**	f	33	32	65
	f%	50.8%	49.2%	100%
Total	f	57	63	120
	f%	47.5%	52.5%	100%

* ES, VS, SS, College - Elementary School, Vocational School, Secondary School and College ** HS, UE, MD - High School, University Education and a Master's Degree
Source authors

Tivoli Park Services and Facilities

Tivoli Park visitors have the opportunity to enjoy nature (flora and fauna) as well as cultural heritage buildings, restaurants and a variety of activities and events, so we wanted to determine which elements of the park's facilities and services are most often visited.

Table 5 The most attractive elements of the park's facilities and services to the visitors

The most attractive elements	f	f%
Outdoor exhibit	35	29.2%
Nature	20	16.7%
Flora and fauna	12	10%
Jakopič Promenade	8	6.7%
Boathouse (Café Čolnarna)	6	5%
Squirrels	4	3.3%
The whole park	4	3.3%
Path to Rožnik	3	2.5%
Walking	3	2.5%
Sports	3	2.5%
Children's playground	2	1.7%
Swimming pool	2	1.7%
Café	2	1.7%
Nothing in particular	2	1.7%
Other	11	9.2%
No answer	3	2.5%
Total	120	100%

Source authors

The data in Table 5 shows that most visitors (29.2%) viewed the outdoor exhibits on the Jakopič Promenade, and a fifth of respondents visited for its nature, followed by visitors interested in its flora and fauna. Eight respondents (6.7%) selected spending time on the promenade (Jakopič Promenade) without viewing the exhibits as their response, six respondents (5%) visited the boathouse (cafe). Interestingly, four visitors (3.3%) indicated that they went to see specific animals (squirrels) and four (3.3%) to see the whole park. Given that the survey was carried out on the Jakopič Promenade, where continuous and specific activities (photo exhibition) take place, we predicted that most visitors would give that answer. The park's sport facilities are quite far from the Jakopič Promenade, so we assumed that respondents would select nature, flora or fauna, and not, for example, sports activities. We expected more frequent visits to the food outlets (boathouse, cafe) than indicated.

Based on the results of customer satisfaction for the services and facilities, we established that 82 (68.3%) of respondents were satisfied, one fifth were very satisfied, and 11 (9.2%) of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 6). We can confirm the third hypothesis.

Table 6 Satisfaction with the facilities and services

Satisfaction with the facilities	f	f%
Very dissatisfied	3	2.5%
Dissatisfied	2	1.7%
Not dissatisfied / not satisfied	11	9.2%
Satisfied	82	68.3%
Very satisfied	20	16.7%
No answer	2	1.7%
Total	120	100%

Source authors

Table 7 relates to the fourth hypothesis. It states that there is no difference in satisfaction with the catering between the age groups. The value of the χ^2 test is 6.18, which is above the critical value in the 2^{nd} stage of liberty (5.991 at 5 percent risk). Chi-squared is statistically significant, so the hypothesis is rejected. We can conclude that there are differences in satisfaction with the catering among the age groups. The difference is mainly found in the sample with respondents aged 30 years: as many as 48.6% of them are not satisfied with the catering. More than a fifth of people aged between 31 and 50 years are not satisfied. A third of respondents aged over 50 years is not satisfied with the catering services in the park. It was assumed that the highest percentage of dissatisfied visitors from catering is found among younger respondents mainly because none of the premises are intended for a young audience.

Table 7 Satisfaction with the catering services relating to the visitors age

Age group		Satisfaction with the catering		Total
		Yes	No	
30 years and less	f	19	18	37
	f%	51.4%	48.6%	100%
From 31 to 50 years	f	32	9	41
	f%	78%	22%	100%
More than 50 years	f	28	14	42
	f%	66.7%	33.3%	100%
Total	f	79	41	120
	f%	65.8%	34.2%	100%

Source authors

Activities and Outdoor Events in Tivoli Park

In this study, we were interested in complementary park services and facilities, so the survey attempted to establish which activities or outdoor events in Tivoli Park were most highlighted by visitors. Regular outdoor activities include those that take place throughout the year or for periods of longer than a year. Traditionally-held events are organized once a year and may last for one day or several days in a row. Among the regular activities in the park are those such as sport activities taking place in a specific location and linked to the sport facilities (for example, in addition to ice-skating for schools, basketball, tennis, roller skating contests/competitions). Another regular park activity is the exhibits on the Jakopič Promenade, which is permanent, but given the fact that the displays change, they are considered temporary. The Library under the Treetops is also regular, where visitors can borrow a book and read it on the supplied couches. These activities are organized to take place outdoors in the park. Walking (see also Jesenkova pot trails), jogging, roller skating, playing basketball, and children's playgrounds cannot be considered to be organized activities, and similarly, when an individual takes part in recreational activities benefitting from the maintained infrastructure, it cannot be considered to be an organized activity. Even yoga and Nordic walking activities, which take place in the park but are not regularly organized, cannot be considered to be regular activities. Among the traditionally-held events are those that take place in the park every year on the same day, or at least within a similar period. These are the FORMAraton charity run, the DM Run for Women, the Moon Festival children's event, and the Party with a Purpose music event.

Table 8 The most recognizable activities and events to the visitors

Activities and events	1st place		2nd place		3rd place		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Exhibit	36	30%	10	8.3%	9	7.5%	55	15.3%
Party with Purpose	15	12.5%	8	6.7%	5	4.2%	28	7.8%
DM run for Women	10	8.3%	10	8.3%	5	4.2%	25	6.9%
Moon Festival	12	10%	6	5%	5	4.2%	23	6.4%
Jogging	6	5%	7	5.8%	7	5.8%	20	5.6%
Škis Marketplace	3	2.5%	5	4.2%	2	1.7%	10	2.8%
Children's playground	2	1.7%	4	3.3%	3	2.5%	9	2.5%
Library under the Treetops	4	3.3%	0	0%	4	3.3%	8	2.2%
Yoga	3	2.5%	2	1.7%	3	2.5%	8	2.2%
Concerts	2	1.7%	3	2.5%	3	2.5%	8	2.2%

Activities and events	1st place		2nd place		3rd place		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Walking	2	1.7%	2	1.7%	2	1.7%	6	1.7%
Boathouse (Café Čolnarna)	0	0%	2	1.7%	1	0.8%	3	0.8%
Relaxing	0	0%	2	1.7%	1	0.8%	3	0.8%
Ice-skating	0	0%	2	1.7%	1	0.8%	3	0.8%
The arrival of the Dalai Lama	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Fish pond	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Leisure activities	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Cyclists	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
Sports training	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
To meet people	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
Other	14	11.7%	27	22.5%	14	11.7%	55	15.3%
No answer	11	9.2%	24	20%	49	40.8%	84	23.3%
Total	120	100%	120	100%	120	100%	360	100%

Source authors

The data in Table 8 indicate that the most visible activity or recognized event for the majority of respondents was the park exhibits (at Jakopič Promenade) (55 of all responses, or 15.3%). Exhibits were in first place, with 36 respondents, meaning 30%. It is interesting that for the second most recognizable event, respondents indicated Party with a Purpose (28 or 7.8% of all responses). This is followed by the DM Run (25 or 6.9% of all responses), and the Moon Festival (23 or 6.4% of all responses). Ten (2.8%) respondents stated the Škis Marketplace (which takes place at the Partizan summer sports ground, which does not fall within the park), with eight (2.2%) responses for Library under the Treetops. As can be seen from Table 8, the other responses relate to activities that are not classified as regular and organized activities (illustrated by yoga and ice-skating, with others as generic activities, such as jogging, walking, relaxing, sports and exercise leisure activities). Concerts are otherwise organized, but we have assumed that those performed in the Hala Tivoli venue are not among the stated activities or outdoor events.

Sources of Information

Of interest to our survey was where visitors most often obtained information on activities, events or updates in Tivoli Park. It is not currently possible to obtain information on activities and events in one place (from a website, publications, annual calendar of events, in the park), so we were interested in determining where visitors obtained their information. Most information about sporting events and activities is published on the website of the Ljubljana Sport and Leisure Facilities (Šport Ljubljana). Advance details of the Moon Festival and Party with a Purpose are published on there. This page also publishes promotional events, e.g. Open Days at Tivoli and Kodeljevo Park tennis centres. Otherwise, event organizers (DM Run for Women, Moon Festival and Party with a Purpose) maintained their own websites. Exhibitions or opening of new photographic exhibitions and the calendar of exhibitions, valid until the end of 2013, are published on the website of the Public Service of Ljubljana Tourism. Information about the Library under the Treetops was (in 2013) published on the Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL) website. Information regarding bird watching in Tivoli Park is usually published on the websites of the daily newspapers. Some information can also be obtained in Ljubljana, MOL Bulletin and in the Where? monthly publications, published in Slovene and English by the Ljubljana Tourism Public Service. For a given activity or event, we assume that the organizers decide in which mass media, and how long before the activity or event it is be promoted (print media, television, radio, posters and other means).

Table 9 Source of information visitors used mostly

Source of information	f	f%
Radio	27	13.6%
Television	25	12.6%
Print media	40	20.1%
Advertising posters, billboards	39	19.6%
Web pages	36	18.1%
Friends, acquaintances	9	4.5%
Random	6	3%
Nowhere	5	2.5%
Word of mouth	4	2%
Not looking for information	3	1.5%
In the park	2	1%
No answer	3	1.5%
Total	199	100%

Source authors

The survey results indicate that 47 users responded to the question with more than one answer. As shown in Table 9, the most frequent stated visitor response was print media, by 40 or 20.1% of all responses. Interestingly, print media is followed by advertising posters, with 39 (19.6%) of all responses. Only then do respondents state Web pages (36 or 18.1% of responses). While we assumed a high percentage of the response for 'print media', we did not expect such a low percentage for television and radio. We assume that advertising on television and radio may not target the right audiences, or the costs are not acceptable to event organizers. Interestingly, 'friends, acquaintances' and 'random' were also given as responses to the source of information.

Given that information covering all the activities, events and news in Tivoli Park is not available in one place (on a single website or single publication), which visitors can access promptly, our survey also determined whether visitors believe that there is enough information about events and news in the park. In response, 60% of the respondents state that they obtained enough information about events and news in the park. Given that the 47 visitors who responded to the question 'Where do the usually get information about the events?' indicated more than one answer, we assume that respondents sought information on events and updates in different ways (different mass media, friends). Nevertheless, more than a third of visitors consider that they do not receive enough information.

Table 10 Informing on events / updates relating to sex

Sex		Do you get enough information about the events?		Total
		Yes	No	
Female	f	43	26	69
	f%	62.3%	37.7%	100%
Male	f	29	22	51
	f%	56.9%	43.1%	100%
Total	f	72	48	120
	f%	60%	40%	100%

Source authors

In the fifth hypothesis, we asserted there is no difference in satisfaction with information about the events/updates in the park between the sexes. The value of the χ^2 test is 0.36 and is below the critical value at 1 degrees of freedom (3.841 at 5 per cent risk). Chi-squared is not statistically significant, so we can confirm the hypothesis (table10). We generalized results to the sample, and the data did not show any difference between the sexes. Thus, more than half of men and women think that they get enough information about events/news.

– *There are no gender differences in satisfaction of information about the events/updates.*

Visitor Wishes for Tivoli Park Services

In the survey, we were interested in what activities or events that visitors desired. The respondents could indicate three answers.

The data in Table 11 show that most visitors desired different kinds of concerts. The majority cited concerts; some also specified specific genres (classical music, brass bands, etc.). This was followed by varied workshops (pottery, art, sports, etc.). Interestingly, the respondents stated that they want more exhibitions as well as a summer cinema, music events and sports activities. Visitors to the park also want

Table 11 Activities and events visitors would like to be organized in the park

Activities and events	1st place		2nd place		3rd place		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Various concerts	12	10%	7	5.8%	2	1.7%	21	5.8%
Various workshops	6	5%	4	3.3%	0	0%	10	2.8%
More exhibitions	6	5%	3	2.5%	0	0%	9	2.5%
Summer cinema	5	4.2%	0	0%	2	1.7%	7	1.9%
Music events	5	4.2%	2	1.7%	0	0%	7	1.9%
Sports activities (events)	4	3.3%	3	2.5%	0	0%	7	1.9%
Art workshops (forma viva)	0	0%	2	1.7%	4	3.3%	6	1.7%
Drama performances	5	4.2%	0	0%	0	0%	5	1.4%
More children's activities	5	4.2%	0	0%	0	0%	5	1.4%
Gymnastics	4	3.3%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1.1%
Yoga	0	0%	3	2.5%	0	0%	3	0.8%
Roller skating events	2	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Tai chi	2	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Satisfied with current offer	2	1.7%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.6%
More events	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Jogging	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Boating	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Culinary events	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Sports workshops	0	0%	2	1.7%	0	0%	2	0.6%
Guided tours	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
Cycling events	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
Various lectures	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.7%	2	0.6%
Other	24	20%	29	24.2.%	20	16.7%	73	20.3%
No answer	38	31.7%	57	47.5%	86	71.7%	181	50.3%
Total	120	100%	120	100%	120	100%	360	100%

Source authors

art workshops, such as *forma viva*, drama performances and more children's activities. Of further interest in the survey was what visitors to Tivoli Park thought is additionally needed to complete the park's services. Most responded, 'I like it as it is', followed by a variety of catering services ('lounge bar', roasted chestnut kiosks, pancake sales, bread and pastry sales, etc.). The respondents also highlighted music events, more activities for the elderly, more activities in the park, renovation of facilities, tours, recitals, more flora and fauna, gymnastics, clean-up campaigns and more dog waste bins.

Conclusion

The survey showed that Tivoli Park can be separated into two aspects, sports and recreation, and culture and nature. When considering international requirements for landscape parks, the primary management objective is for at least three quarters of the park area to become protected areas; Tivoli Park, in its entirety, would be considered a part where this objective is not taken into account, as its area does not exceed a quarter of the landscape park.

We shall design a programme of services and facilities that can be applied to the entire landscape park, which considers the cultural-natural aspect of the park. For the basic programme, we have included the maintenance of the paths, care of flora and fauna, activities taking place in architectural buildings, sports facilities (indoor and outdoor) and catering. As an extended programme, we include outdoor activities and outdoor events. These are temporary exhibitions on the Jakopič Promenade, Library under the Treetops, workshops (organized only within the frame of the Moon Festival), outdoor sports and cultural events (DM Run for Women, Moon Festival, Party with a Purpose).

As shown in the results of the survey (conducted on the Jakopič Promenade, which is a part of the cultural and natural aspect of the park), the majority of visitors come from the urban communities adjacent to Tivoli, and almost half of them visited the park every day or several times a week (more than half of the men). This means that a high percentage of respondents are regular visitors who live near the park. We define gender differences in the frequency of visiting the park to be definite, and we have to reject the first hypothesis. The difference is due to the difference in visit patterns, since nearly two-thirds of women visit the park as often as every day, or several times a week, while more than half of the men visit the park every day or several times a week.

Almost half of the respondents stated 'Walking' to be their main motive for visiting (respondents with higher education accounted for more than half). We cannot confirm our second hypothesis because the education of the respondents affects the motive for visiting the park. We generalized the results to the sample, and the data defined the difference to be more than half of the visitors from high school, a university degree and a master's degree visiting the park for a walk, while more than half of the respondents with lower education visited the park for other motives. Based on the results of customer satisfaction with the facilities and services, we determined that the respondents were satisfied with them and confirmed the third hypothesis.

On the supply side, we wanted to know what the most visited areas of the park were, and more than half indicated the exhibits and natural surroundings (trees, flora, fauna). However, no one indicated visiting buildings (the International Centre of Graphic Arts or city nurseries), and only a few mentioned the café. We note that visitors mainly come to the park for basic and additional outdoor events and services. The survey also showed that the offer (activities run in the architectural or catering establishments) in particular, are not sufficiently recognized. We focus on the satisfaction with the catering among the age groups of the visitors and found differences. The most dissatisfied with it were respondents aged 30 years or younger, mainly because any premises not intended for a young audience. For those over 30 years old who visit the park alone, with a partner, with the family, the facilities are more suitable. Based on the results, we rejected the fifth hypothesis.

In the case of additional services (activities and outdoor events), we find that the majority of visitors are satisfied with them; two thirds of the visitors attended the activities and outdoor events several times. The results of the survey also showed that the most recognized activities and outdoor events were the exhibitions on Jakopič Promenade, Party with a Purpose, DM Run for Women, Moon Festival. Almost all visitors to the exhibitions have been there many times, and even more visitors consider the outdoor exhibitions to be interesting events. We note that visitors are familiar with most of the activities and events, as part of the additional services, except for the Library under the Treetops, of which very few respondents were aware. In preparing the proposed comprehensive Tivoli Park programme, we wanted to take into account what activities and events visitors requested in the park. The survey showed that they look forward to activities and events that should mainly be considered as part of an additional programme. Primarily, these would be cultural activities (concerts, workshops, exhibitions, etc.).

The results of this study have also shown what aspects of the park could have greater success. The survey primarily shows this through buildings (with most visitors mentioning Jakopič Promenade, but not the City Nurseries or Hotel Tivoli - Švicarija), monuments, garden sculptures and fountains, most respondents correctly identified their number, but a high percentage of visitors did not recall any, or could not recall their names. Even among the recognizable figures such as Plečnik and Jakopič, no one mentioned the gardeners or Fran Jesenko. The offer proposal aims to develop the cultural-natural aspect of the park, mostly affecting the architectural buildings and monuments, garden sculptures and fountains. The proposal will be designed for additional events and services, i.e. outdoor activities and outdoor events, exhibitions, thematic trails and workshops. The activities can be divided into two: those that educate visitors and contribute to the conservation and protection of the park, and those that are aimed at developing new facilities in the park. Firstly, we include horticultural activities, which would also mean the revival of these activities since it was the most important activity of the park in the past. This could mean, for example, flowerbeds so that visitors would be invited to hear from specialists about different types of flowers and techniques. Such promoted exhibits would create much interest during the spring and summer and attract many people. In designing thematic trails, several examples are given: the Plečnik Trail (visit to all the park's architectural works), Discover Cultural Heritage (view heritage buildings, monuments, garden sculptures and fountains), Sculptors and Architects and their works in Tivoli, Baroque Tivoli Park (development of Baroque designs in the park and Baroque mansion, Cekin Mansion is a part of sport and recreation), the Latterman Trail, Discover the Work of Vaclav Hejnic and Anton Lap, Discover the Park's Flora and Fauna, etc.

For outdoor exhibitions, it would be possible to frequently display content on the Jakopič Promenade relating to the park (for example, activities from the park's past, presentation of famous individuals and their contributions to the park). Events and workshops can be linked to the topics of the thematic trails and exhibitions (e.g. Plečnik Day, Jesenko Day, events for exhibition openings, flower bed workshops, and others). Developing new content could include, as we discovered in the research, promenade concerts, performances by small vocal and musical groups, art and photography workshops, and similar events. Events and thematic trails could be connected with new landscape design trends. Park events could be offered in conjunction with other parts of the landscape park, for example, a hike on the Jesenko trail followed by a visit to the Cankar Memorial Room at Rožnik and then back to Tivoli. Additional outdoor events could similarly be connected with architectural features; these would be reasonable in the winter when the weather conditions for outdoor activities are not the most suitable. It would be sensible to move all sports and recreational activities and outdoor events, to the sports and recreational areas of the park.

Tivoli Park is, and will continue to be, important for all city residents, so it makes sense to provide a place where they can realize the importance of protecting the park, and also get current information. For the management of the park's important information, there is no difference in satisfaction of information about the events/updates in the park between the sexes. More than half of the males and females stated that getting enough information about events/news of the park was not a problem. For a comprehensive programme for Tivoli Park that will be related to services and events in the other parts of the landscape park, additional research is required, particularly into offers that include natural heritage and the zone between Brdo and Koseze. Further research questions could investigate which sites would be appropriate, the targets for additional programmes, how to integrate information and communication technologies, and similar issues. In the future, the landscape park will have an operator; therefore, it will be necessary for all stakeholders, cooperating from an interdisciplinary approach, to create a comprehensive Tivoli Gardens programme or Landscape Park Management Plan.

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Review Scientific Article

Systems Thinking on Complex Tourism Systems

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The complexity of tourism systems requires holistic and accurate decision-making. Systems thinking became a mode of thinking in the last century; it is a point of view that approaches tourism and its challenges as a whole. Through systems methodology, methods of modeling and simulation, we present a survey of tourism systems as a very important branch of welfare through feedback loops and a simulation model. Such a model usually consists of a causal loop diagram. Simulation becomes a multidisciplinary approach to solving problems of complex systems. This paper demonstrates that simulation results are evaluated with the group decision-making support system and with expert systems. Conclusions derived from a model understanding and model simulation give optimal results to the decision-makers. Thus, systems thinking principles lead towards thinking of cooperation and co-creation in tourism and life in general.

Key words: systems thinking, tourism, complex systems, MODSIM, modelling, simulation

Introduction

Let's face it, the universe is messy. It is nonlinear, turbulent, and chaotic. It is dynamic. It spends its time in transient behavior on its way to somewhere else, not in mathematically neat equilibria. It self-organizes and evolves. It creates diversity, not uniformity. That's what makes the world interesting, that's what makes it beautiful, and that's what makes it work." (Donella H. Meadows)

The rapidly growing service industry and turbulence in the global tourism market are requiring flexibility and fast reaction times from the entire service industry. It requires decisions that frequently reflecting opposing interests. There are principles, models and laws that apply to generalized systems or their subclasses, the nature of their component elements, and the relations or forces between them (Bertalanffy & Hoffkirchner, 2015). An excellent methodological approach to these "forces" or problems is urgently needed. We encounter the systems approach and the methods of systems dynamics and systems thinking, which became common management tools in the 1990s (Senge, 2006). Since system dynamics models are essentially simple, one must find a compromise between simplicity, limited usefulness, and complexity. According to Stroh (2015), conventional or linear thinking is the basis for how most of us were taught in school and still tend to divide the world into specific disciplines and problems into their components under the assumption that we can best address the whole by focusing on the parts. Conventional (linear) thinking is not suitable to address complex problems. The answer to solving the complex problems of complex systems lies in a shift in thinking: from conventional (linear) thinking to systems (integrative) thinking. Systems thinking is thinking in terms of relationships, patterns, and contexts, and presents new concepts of life (Capra, 2014). It gives us a holistic perspective for viewing the world around us and seeing ourselves in the world (László, 2002)

Tourism as a Complex System

We do not know what was the first form of systematic knowledge our ancestors developed. Certainly the attempt to classify the plants and animals, to understand health and disease, must be one of the earliest. (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)

The world is a very complex system, and within it there is a subsystem of tourism, which itself is a complex system. A hierarchical organization is a feature of a complex system. (Simon, 1991) According to Ladyman et al. (2013), a complex system is a one that exhibits the following characteristics: feedback loops; some degree of spontaneous order; robustness of that order; and emergent organization. All systems have a purpose (Kim, 1999). They have common patterns, behaviours, and properties that can be understood and used to develop greater insight into the behaviour of complex phenomena and to move closer toward a unity of science (Laszlo, 2002). The characteristics of systems are connected to the purpose of each system: to seeking balance to serve specific purposes within larger systems, to combining the parts in a way for the system to carry out its purpose and to recognising the fact that every system has feedback (Anderson, Johnson, 1997). The last we represent graphically with feedback loops, which connect entities among themselves. Following Banathy's definitions, we recognize three types of systems: evolutionary (consciousness), soft and hard systems. Hard systems involve simulations and often use computers and the techniques of operation research. They are useful for problems that can be justifiably quantified. However, they cannot easily take into account unquantifiable variables (opinions, culture, politics, etc.), and may treat people as being passive, rather than having complex motivations. Soft systems cannot easily be quantified, especially those involving people holding multiple and conflicting frames of reference. They are useful for understanding motivations, viewpoints and interactions, and addressing qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions of problem situations. Evolutionary systems, similar to dynamic systems are understood as open, complex systems, but with the capacity to evolve over time. Banathy (2000) uniquely integrated the interdisciplinary perspectives of systems research (including chaos, complexity, and cybernetics), cultural anthropology, evolutionary theory, and the evolution of consciousness.

When we discuss tourism systems, we consider components (parts, elements) the co-dependency-interconnections among the components, the dynamics (change) and the environment. As an example, we can describe a hotel system: the components (tourists) of a system (hotel) are interconnected (check-in at the reception desk); they influence one another. They are dynamic (dialogue); this is a reason for the change. The system receives influences (guest's remark) from the environment and sends back influences (reactions) to the environment. From these elements, one can create a model that represents the basis of the systems approach and systems thinking, which is shown in Figure 1:

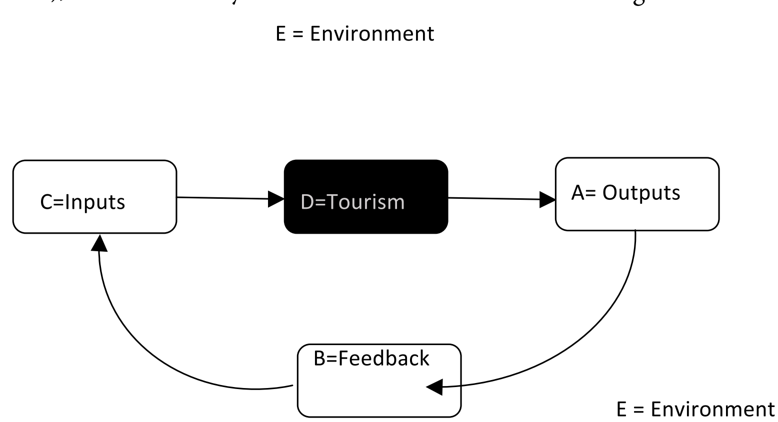

Figure 1 A cybernetic model of tourism system as a black box.

The primary step of the system decision-maker starts at A: the outputs of a tourism system. The decision-maker uses as his primary questions the questions about the influence of his vision or (outputs, A) to the environment (E, other people, nature, society), uses feedback information (B, what will my vision bring to the E) and asks himself what his vision (A, outputs) brings to the environment (E) and what the current situation is (C, inputs, ideas, teams, co-creation) for achieving the (A) and how he can help in the process (B) either with help or without any worries if he cannot influence the process. In order to avoid the trap of the simplicity of systems thinking, we can build a simulation model of effective decision-making in which we attempt to implement the optimal systems solutions.

Principal Model Simulation of a Tourism System

In concept, a feedback system is a closed system. Its dynamic behavior arises within its internal structure. Any action which is essential to the behavior of the mode being investigated must be included inside the system boundary (Jay W. Forrester)

The simulation was once simply referred to as 'simulation'; nowadays, it is more often called, 'modelling and simulation' (M&S or MODSIM), emphasizing the importance of first modelling the system of interest before developing a computational representation (Loper, 2014). Implementation of the simulation system enhances learning processes (Kljajić, Borštnar et al., 2011). The simulation model we discussed (Fig. 2) requires decision-making given by a group of experts, who cover different areas. The above-discussed methodology is implemented with the use of a simulation model, which is described below and shown in Fig. 2, which presents the principle scheme of simulation system for decision assessment in tourism. It also shows the interaction between the tourism business system and the people involved in it: the participants in a decision-making process and simulation model.

The participants in a decision-making process are a part of the tourism business process. The model can be used as a basis for accepting business decisions. Modelling and Scenario determination is a knowledge-capturing process in the form of the structure and behaviour of the model. Once the model is defined and validated, experimentation with different scenarios is possible. The tourism expert group determines the set of different scenarios, which represents possible future actions in the real system. The results gathered as the output of the model are evaluated with the multi-criterial evaluation function. At this stage, many different multi-criterial evaluation methods may be used such as agent-based modelling,

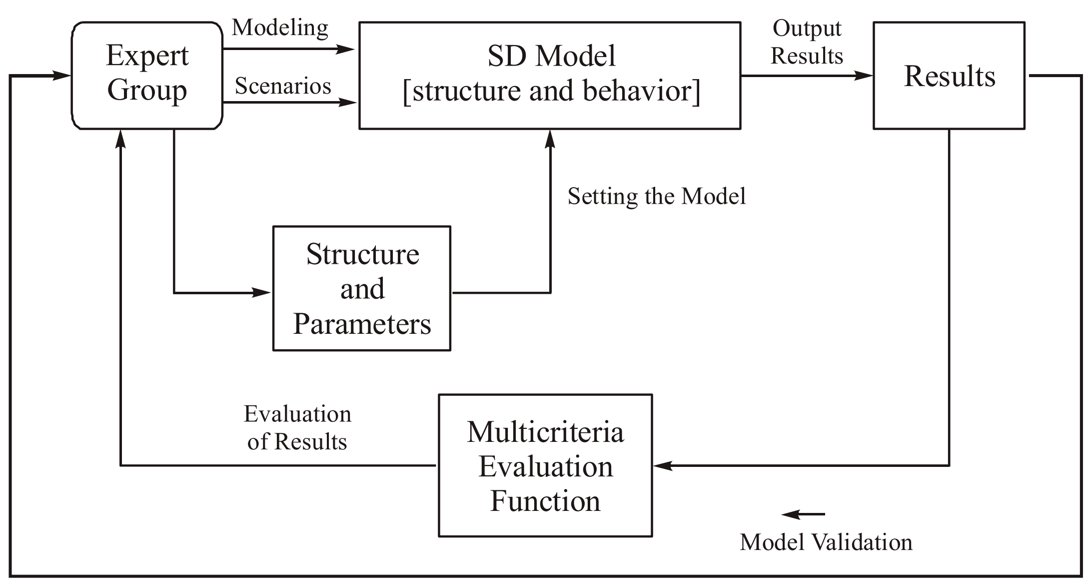

Figure 2 The principle scheme of simulation methodology for decision-making support in tourism enterprises (Jere Jakulin, Kljajić & Škraba, 2002)

weighted average (Vincke, 1992), and Expert Systems (ES) (Rajkovič and Bohanec, 1991). Information feedback provides the expert group with the possibility of creatively determining a new set of scenarios and multi-criterial evaluation functions relating to the given situation. Simulated and actual performances of the system are compared in order to adapt the strategy according to changes in the environment.

The systems thinking solving method with a simulation model follows standard steps: the stating of the analysis, the development of causal-loop diagrams, the writing of the model's equations and model implementation. Particular scenarios that form and determine a tourist market in a certain environment are tested on a simulation system. A simulator is connected to the GSS (Group Support System). The participants using GSS work directly with the system simulator. A system simulator is connected to a database, which is necessary for the activation of the simulation model. Simulation results are evaluated both with the group decision-making support system and with expert systems. In all of this, the understanding of the system increases. With the described model, the experimental loop on a simulation model has been finished with the help of the system simulator and scenario ranking. The elements of the decision-making support system are Powersim, a tool for the construction and use of a simulator; Ventana Group Systems, the Ventana group working support system; DEX, a shell of an expert system; and Expert Choice, evaluation with agent-based modelling.

Work with a group decision-making tool is anonymous, raises creative and co-creative thinking, which enables a greater flow of ideas and reduces unwanted influences. The participants become more relaxed since no one knows where the ideas come from, and creativity is thus released; this simply would not be the case in more conventional ways of working. The work time decreases and the efficiency of participants increases. The final result is better, as the decision becomes a group decision with which conflict between polaried groups is minimized, and a consensus is achieved for the development of further actions.

Present opportunities and future needs for this kind of decision-making system must be mentioned. Results are continuously mediated and co-created with the expert group, providing an informational feedback loop in the learning process, which has a significant impact on the decision process, as the preliminary analysis has indicated.

Conclusions

Tourism as a complex system includes many parts: a wide variety of people, institutions, and organizations. If we want tourism to be successful in all its aspects, its parts should connect and interact with them. If we wish to develop strategies in tourism without extra effort, we must shift our perceptions. Instead of fragmented and linear thinking, we use systems thinking, which requires respect for its key concepts: reinforcing feedback, balancing feedback, and delays. It also requires the consideration of the big picture point of view, regarding both quantitative and qualitative data, dynamics and the complexity of a system and short-term as well as long-term perspectives.

In this paper, we have presented the idea of co-creative decision making, which a group of decision-makers achieve when they use systems thinking. We showed a simple feedback diagram, which requires thinking in systems and using the feedback information. To avoid oversimplification, we presented the implementation of group decision-making by creating a simulation model. In this review paper, we present a systems (holistic) approach to tourism through its hierarchical structure and suggest contemporary technology for 'what if' tourism behaviour. Systems approach and systems principles present the 'big picture' point of view and result in optimal answers to complex tourism problems.

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Original Scientific Article

Assessing Innovation Potential in Slovene Culinary Events

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Due to the general scarcity of tourism innovation statistics and information sources in tourism, this analysis focuses on different types of successful micro-tourism organizations and employs case study methodology to study innovation potential in Slovene culinary events. After analysing current culinary and innovation research trends, four events web pages and their media coverage were analysed through a case study approach using qualitative content analysis. Three innovation attribute groups were formed, totalling 23 descriptors of innovation-related activities of the organizers and the events. In the results section, all the attributes are described for each studied case. The discussion section identifies common characteristics, particularities, and implications designated in relation to the innovation potentials of culinary events in Slovenia and in general.

Key words: tourism innovation, culinary events, national tourism promotion

Introduction

A company that wants to remain competitive in today's market has to be (among other things) innovative. A company's ability to meet consumer expectations is largely dependent on its ability to develop and deliver attractive goods and services. Innovation is, therefore, a key factor for sustainable competitive advantage and, as such, one of the strategic endeavours for companies.

New trends in tourism are expanding rapidly because the complexity of the global tourism phenomenon is constantly affected by the abundant legacy and continuous development of the array of (sub)cultures, values, interests and concrete forms of human leisure. In such a complex environment, tourism providers must be able to detect new trends and offer intelligently designed, recognizable and memorable tourism products, which bring innovative benefits to them, their guests and their surroundings.

The coordination of the systematic promotion of innovation in Slovenian tourism is the domain of the Slovenian Tourism Board (STB) and its partners: the Directorate for Tourism at the Ministry of Economy and the University of Primorska's Faculty of Tourism Studies, among others. Since 2004, STB has rewarded the most innovative tourism achievements with the Sejalec (Sower) award. In addition, national tourism creativity and innovation are promoted through the Bank of Tourism Potentials in Slovenia (BTPS) web platform; BTPS Creator financial support for the most inventive ideas in Slovenian tourism, and several other measures (Križaj & Zakonjšek, 2011).

This paper analyses a specific layer of tourism innovations in Slovenia: culinary events. In its theoretical section, this paper analyses current culinary and innovation research trends, then presents the applied methodology and analysed units, followed by results and discussion with practical implications and further research suggestions.

Theoretical Background

There is a growing interest in the research of culinary tourism, community food systems, food sustainability, and related developments, as well as marketing and delivery activities (Kline & Lee, 2015). According to Getz and Robinson (2014), some of the most popular food-related events are farmers markets, cultural festivals, wine-food tasting events, food festivals, and visiting of upscale restaurants; with tourists' most favoured involvement in all of them being tasting authentic regional cuisine in local environments.

It comes as no surprise then that food preferences can play a significant role in tourist's destination choices (Mak et al., 2012) and that spending on food experience can represent as much as one-third of the total expenditure (Hall & Sharples, 2003), significantly affecting the local hospitality business sector and local food supply chains in destinations. Because of the synergetic effects, there is even a strong presence of professional and scientific discussions oriented towards strategies of event bundling. Such collaboration connects several events, organizers, event attendees and destination marketing organizations, which all affect event or festival value and outcomes (Xu et al., 2016). Yoon at al. (2010) have been analysing the linkage between quality, value, satisfaction, and loyalty of festival visitors. The results of their study identify quality attributes (food, program, souvenirs, facilities, and others) that contribute to satisfaction, loyalty and to the understanding of events design.

Mason and Paggiaro (2012) emphasize that culinary-related tourism offers have numerous beneficial effects on tourism destinations, including improved awareness, emotional connectedness, loyalty, greater cooperation and differentiation of the brand. Similar to the winescape concept that (rather than merely focusing on narrow wine tourism products) encompasses extended experience needs for the holistic leisure and holiday bundle (Bruwer & Alant, 2009), the festivalscape concept focuses on wider, functional and affective dimensions of festivals and similar events (Ryu & Jang, 2007).

If a destination decides to invest in the ever-stronger 'foodies' tourism segment and corresponding recognition, Getz et al. (2015) suggest a model for a demand-side approach to food tourism planning and development. It consists of five interlinked stages: market research, evaluating demand in a competitive environment, developing and testing new products, evaluating outcomes, and changing the marketing mix. The latter is driven by business optimization activities and by global influences in terms of new trends and new visitor segments from around the globe.

Such globalization streams in (once truly local) authentic and regional cuisine systems can be understood as a threat to indigenous gastronomic identities but can also be explained as an incentive for the reinvention of and business opportunity for local gastronomic products and identities. Leaning on the world culture theory perspective, Mak et al., (2012) suggest that globalization can positively reconstruct or reinvent local gastronomic traditions and specialities.

This brings us to the phenomenon of tourism innovation and its potentials. In general, tourism providers are not considered to be very active inventors (Krizaj et al., 2014). They tend to be innovators searching to adopt and fully incorporate innovations that are new to the firm, maybe the region, but not necessarily to the global markets. Therefore, in tourism sector we usually encounter incremental (and mostly not radical) innovations upgraded from previous adoptions and knowledge (Hjalager, 2010; Camisón and Monfort-Mir, 2012). Camisón and Monfort-Mir (ibid.) argue that tourism innovations are ubiquitous, but they are not thoroughly identified via official instruments and inquiries that are mostly focused on other sectors and scales. This argument leads us to the speculation that there might be more innovations existing or detected in tourism, but that due to its multidisciplinary and complex characteristics, they might be hidden.

According to multi-perspective innovation literature (Johannessen et al., 2001; Sundbo et al., 2007), there are many viewpoints to be considered in order to gain overall insight into innovation phenomena in general. Camisón and Monfort-Mir (2012) suggest that innovations occurring at the specific tourism provider level might be inadequately assessed through national or regional level indicators. The authors also question whether general innovation analyses can seize the extensive variety of attributes needed to describe the bundles of diverse services included in tourism (Tribe, 1997; Liburd, 2012).

The tourism industry includes a significant amount of small and medium-sized organizations that can contribute to the more than 90% national share of companies employing up to 100 employees and over 70% employing up to 20 employees (Smith, 2006; Thomas et al., 2011). Such smaller entities are more often than not limited in their innovative capacities and are therefore more dependent on the public sector's development support initiatives. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to gather insights into such organizations' evolution and delivery processes (Camisón and Monfort-Mir, 2012). These kinds of insights could help improve the corresponding policies. In practice, this is still not the case. European Community innovation surveys mostly cover organizations with more than ten employees, meaning that an important share of smaller entities, strongly dependent on public policies, can be excluded from the results they bring and from the needs they address.

Method

Due to the discussed general scarcity of innovation statistics and information sources in tourism (Camison & Monfort-Mir, 2011), presented analyses focused on micro-organizations and employed case study methodology to better understand innovation in Slovene culinary events, following research guidelines and specifics advocated by Yin (2013). Four culinary events' web pages and their media coverage were analysed through a case study approach using qualitative content analysis (Berelson, 1952), a technique frequently used in tourism research and innovation categorization (Baregheh et al., 2009).

The basic analytical approach followed the arguments of Krizaj et al. (2014) and Camison and Monfort-Mir, (2011) regarding mostly hidden tourism innovations and their basic common attributes. Three attribute groups were formed following the Zachman Framework ontology for conducting enterprise analysis (Molnar & Balint, 2015; Lapalme et al., 2015) and answering the innovation questions of Who, What and How, following Hamel's (2006) innovation management implications and guidelines. The 'Who' section relates to standard demographic (organizational, size, location, capital source, age) attributes. 'What' seeks for the cases content description and its linking to the existing tourism segments and core business activities of event organizers. 'How' addresses the outcomes and reach of the analysed culinary events (Table 1).

The cases that have been chosen (based on the organizers' (micro) size and their publicly perceived current or past innovative status in the Slovenian tourism sector) for the analysis are:

Table 1 Case study attributes

WHO	WHAT	HOW
Organizer	Type of event	Marketing channels
Organizational form	Duration Frequency	No. of participating providers
No. of employees		Limitations of visitors
Origin of capital		
Organizer's age Event's age Organizer's region Event's region	Organizers' registered activities Event activities Tourism segments	National publicity Foreign publicity Scientific literature references
		Follow-up projects Parent project Awards

a) Odprta kuhna – Open Kitchen food market,
b) Festival kulinarike - Culinary Festival,
c) Festival čokolade - Chocolate Festival
d) Ljubljanska vinska pot - Ljubljana Wine Route.

Odprta Kuhna is a food market that takes place every Friday, from late March to late October, between 8 am and 10 pm at the central market in Ljubljana. It consists of different traditional Slovenian and international cuisine providers. Organizers adhere to the 'no competition' concept, and thus the same dish should not appear on two different stands, which contributes to diversity and attractiveness of the event (http://www.odprtakuhna.si/, accessed 2 Oct. 2015).

The Culinary Festival takes place every year in November for two days in Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia, on the chosen culinary theme. The main purpose of the event is to present ambitious cooks and hosts, and to contribute to promoting culinary art and hospitality. The festival takes place at two levels: the first is the Theatre of Flavours in which participants create dishes on the indicated theme live in front of audiences. The second is the Gallery of Flavours in which the schools, pubs, restaurants, delicacy providers, and others present themselves (http://www.festivalkulinarike.si/, accessed in October 2015).

The Chocolate Festival is open for three days in April at Linhart Square in Radovljica and in Radovljica Manor. The festival includes producers of chocolate and providers of chocolate-related food and drinks from Slovenia and abroad. Chocolate products are available for tasting (paid with coupons on sale at the event) and products from the regular sale of participating chocolatiers are sold as well. In the manor, chocolatiers present the production processes of their products, while there are also performances and workshops for children and adults on Linhart Square (http://www.festival-cokolade.si, accessed in October 2015).

The Ljubljana Wine Route is held for one day in June in the centre of Ljubljana, hosting a number of Slovenian wine growers and wine makers, manufacturers of various delicacies and cultural workers from all over Slovenia. Tourist information centres, tourism service providers and cultural and artistic performers are included. The event comprises a comprehensive range of Slovenian wines and cuisine, cultural elements, and additional tourist services (http://www.ljubljanskavinskapot.si/festival/, accessed in October 2015).

In the Results section, all the Who, What, and How attributes are described for each case presented above. Following that, the Discussion section then identifies their common characteristics and peculiarities designated in relation to innovation potentials of culinary events in Slovenia and in general.

Results

Who

The 'Who' group of cases' attributes addresses standard demographic (organizational, size, location, capital source, and age) issues, the first of them being the organizational form of the chosen events' organizers. The forms were diverse: the holder of Odprta kuhna is a limited liability company, the organizer of the Festival of Chocolate is a public institution, while the Culinary Festival and the Ljubljana Wine Route organizer are the results of individual entrepreneurs. The numbers of employees are low: Odprta Kuhna organizer has only one employee, the Chocolate Festival organizer has three to four, and the last one has no employees at all (Table 2). Since these are all big and seasonal events, the low number of permanent employees is somehow understandable.

The terms of the organizers' funding are also diverse, and it is difficult to find a common denominator among them. As we see in Table 1, the institution Odprta Kuhna is primarily financed with foreign capital; the organizers of the Culinary Festival Ljubljana and Wine Route do not have any, while the Chocolate Festival organizer is financed by public funds.

The age of the organizing institutions is compared with the age of the events in Table 3, the main reason being that many (smaller) innovative companies are in fact set up solely on the basis of the innovation (Bonte et al., 2007). From the age of organizers and age of the events themselves, we can see that the companies are older than the events in our cases. Because the events are seasonal and short, it is understandable that organizers are engaged in other activities; however, it would be possible that the selected events would be the starting point innovations in the development of the companies.

Table 2 Form of the organization and its size

Event	Organizer	Organizational form	No. of employees	Origin of capital
Odprta kuhna	Olam, d.o.o.	limited liability company	1	Foreign capital
Culinary Festival	Poslovno svetovanje, Radomir Stojanovič, s.p.	sole proprietor	0	No capital
Chocolate Festival	Javni zavod Turizem Radovljica	public institution	3-4	Public capital
Ljubljana Wine Route	Poslovno svetovanje, Radomir Stojanovič, s.p.	sole proprietor	0	No capital

Source Bizi.si business directory

Table 3 Age of organizers and events

Event	Organizer	Organizer's age (years)	Event's age (years)	Organizer's region	Event's region
Odprta kuhna	Olam, d.o.o.	6	2	Primorska	Osrednjeslovenska
Culinary Festival	Poslovno svetovanje, Radomir Stojanovič, s.p.	9	7	Osrednjeslovenska	Osrednjeslovenska
Chocolate Festival	Javni zavod Turizem Radovljica	6	4	Gorenjska	Gorenjska
Ljubljana Wine Route	Poslovno svetovanje, Radomir Stojanovič, s.p.	9	5	Osrednjeslovenska	Osrednjeslovenska

Source Bizi.si business directory

Geographically speaking, organizers come from different regions, which is not reflected in the location of events. While each institution comes from a different region (Primorska, Gorenjska, Osrednjeslovenska), the concentration of events is in the central Osrednjeslovenska region (Table 5), specifically in the capital Ljubljana, where three of the four events are located. The exception is the Chocolate Festival, which takes place in Radovljica. This festival's location is based on a rich chocolate legacy, since chocolate products have been produced in nearby Lesce since 1922. The Lesce chocolate tradition is also a reason to place the Festival of Chocolate in the immediate vicinity with the purpose of synergetic effects for wider Gorenjska region recognition.

What

Apart from their size, we can see that the organizers are quite diverse. Similarly, their engagements in a diverse set of activities and projects are evident also from the Ajpes national register of companies' business activities (SDK[1]), which in the case of the Festival of Chocolate organizer is 'Other unclassified leisure activities' (SDK R93.299) (Table 5). The organizer of Odprta Kuhna is working in the field of 'Non-specialized sale of various products' (SDK G46.190), and the organizers of the other two events are in the category of 'Other business and management consultancy' (SDK M70.220). None of them declare its core business activities to be in the SDK I category, which covers 'Tourism and hospitality'.

1 http://www.ajpes.si/Registri/Drugo/SKD (accessed 8 Oct. 2015).

If it is more difficult to find similarities of the organizers, it is easier to do so for the comparison of events (Table 4). All four cases are time-limited services, which in three cases last from one to three days, while Odprta kuhna runs every Friday for ca. 30 weeks. Regarding content, all four events are tourist events marketed either as fairs or as festivals.

In relation to the performed activities and related tourism segments, the events are similar (Table 5). The activities of Odprta kuhna are related to catering, fairs, entertainment and cultural activities; the activities of the Culinary Festival are catering, cultural activities and sales; the activities of the Festival of Chocolate are sales, cultural activities and catering services; and the activities of the Ljubljana Wine Route is fair activity, sales and catering.

According to the tourism industry segments, these events may, of course, be assigned to culinary or food tourism, although they also include components of other tourism activities (Table 5). A common feature is that these are events in which participating providers present and sell their culinary products. The differences are that Odprta kuhna and the Culinary Festival providers prepare their products on site, while the Chocolate Festival and Ljubljana Wine Route are mainly focused on the sale of already prepared culinary products. The Chocolate Festival and Ljubljana Wine Route also have strong local regional components, since the events are largely dedicated to the promotion of the location/destination. At Odprta kuhna and the Culinary Festival, there are many foreign providers, while at the Chocolate Festival only in the previous year has this number started to increase significantly. Finally, the Ljubljana Wine Route almost exclusively carries local providers.

Table 4 Type, duration, and frequency of events

Event	Type of event	Duration	Frequency
Odprta kuhna	Fair	Each Friday	March–October
Culinary Festival	Festival	2 days	Once per year
Chocolate Festival	Festival	3 days	Once per year
Ljubljana Wine Route	Fair	1 day	Once per year

Table 5 Organizer's registered activities, event activities and tourism segments

Event	Organizers' registered activities	Event activities	Tourism segments
Odprta kuhna	G46.190 – Non-specialized sale of various products	Catering Fairs Entertainment Cultural activities	Culinary Festivals Cultural City
Culinary Festival	M70.220 – Other business and management consultancy	Catering Cultural activities Sales	Culinary Events Festivals Cultural
Chocolate Festival	R93.299 - Other unclassified leisure activities	Sales Cultural activities Catering	Culinary tourism Festivals Cultural Local
Ljubljana Wine Route	M70.220 – Other business and management consultancy	Fair activity Sales Catering	Culinary tourism Events Festivals Cultural City Local

How

From the publicly available data, we were able to assess events' performance in four different ways: their publicity, number of attending providers, event's follow up projects and received acknowledgments.

The organizers are promoting their events in a similar fashion as all of them have an associated website, and they are all present on social networks and in the traditional media (Table 6), from which available data about participants was gathered. We can evaluate the publicity of the events through their presence in Slovenian and foreign media, as well as through mentions in the professional literature. According to the references in the Slovenian media, the events do not differ much, as they are all frequently mentioned in national media, such as the mainstream television channels and newspapers. Less coverage is found in foreign media; several mentions were found for the Ljubljana Wine Route, but none for the Chocolate Festival (Table 7). Only the Ljubljana Wine Route was found in the professional literature: in Tourism - Scientific and Professional Journal (Jurinčić and Bojnec, 2010) and in the Journal of Applied Economics and Business (Petrevski and Deleva, 2014).

The general innovative inclination of the events and their organizers can be assessed through their follow-up projects. Two organizers have been active

Table 6 Marketing channels and participants

Event	Marketing channels	No. of participating providers	Limitations of visitors
Odprta kuhna	Website	More than 100 different providers per season (ca. 30 on one Friday)	Unlimited
Culinary Festival	Social media	N/A	Limited
Chocolate Festival	Advertising in traditional media	20 Slovene and 5 foreign providers	Unlimited
Ljubljana Wine Route		N/A	Unlimited

Table 7 Publicity

Event	National media	Foreign media	Scientific literature
Odprta kuhna	Dnevnik, Visit Ljubljana, RTV SLO, Zurnal24, Napovednik, Delo, Slovenske Novice …	InYourPocket.com, Trip advisor, Kongres Magazine*	/
Culinary Festival	Napovednik, Delo, POP TV, BTC, Visit Ljubljana, Dnevnik, Eventim …	Eventful, Kongres Magazine, 10times.com	/
Chocolate Festival	RTV SLO, Zurnal24, Delo, POP TV, Napovednik, Gorenjski glas, Slovenske novice …	/	/
Ljubljana Wine Route	Visit Ljubljana, Dnevnik, RTV SLO, Napovednik, POP TV, Slovenske novice, Delo …	Kongres Magazine, Local Life, Inyourpocket.com, Bufolin, Tripadvisor, Citiesdirect, Antiqpalace	Petrevska in Deleva (2014), Jurinčić in Bojnec(2010)

* Kongres Magazine is published in the English language by Slovene company, but it is intended for global audience; its editorial board is international.

Table 8 Spin-off projects, parent projects, and awards

Event	Follow-up projects	Parent project	Awards
Odprta kuhna	Beer and Burger Festival; expanding core festival to other cities	/	Sejalec Jakob
Culinary Festival	/	Wine festival	/
Chocolate Festival	/	/	/
Ljubljana Wine Route	St. Martin's Wine Route	/	/

in the placement of new follow-up projects. The organizers of Odprta kuhna have started to reproduce the event in several other cities, and created the Beer and Burger Festival (the first such specialized type of event in Slovenia). The Ljubljana Wine Route added St. Martin's Wine Route and Culinary Festival as a follow-up project (Table 8).

Of all the events, only Odprta kuhna has been awarded on the national level; the event won the Sejalec award for the most innovative Slovenian tourism product and the Jakob award for excellence and quality in tourism in the Alpe Adria regions in 2014 (Table 11).

Discussion

The analysis of four selected Slovenian culinary events shows that their organizers share relatively similar traits. All of the events are performed by micro/small firms or organizations, which have not been established because of the introduced event/innovation; the development and delivery of the studied event is just one of their activities. Since all four events are or were perceived as innovative projects in the Slovenian or even wider media region, it is (according to the introductory chapters) expected for them to be developed further. Some of the projects in question are already being followed-up in their organizers' new endeavours but in publicly available data, they mostly share a lack of further 'core' development of the events themselves.

Odprta kuhna has its new follow-up Beer and Burger Festival of related local providers, which (according to the first media responses) is a step in the right direction and is (again, as Odprta kuhna) an event that is a novelty for Slovenia. However, since Odprta kuhna by itself is perceived as a very dynamic project, from which users might expect ongoing variety and innovation, the organizer will also have to maintain the same fresh principle of Odprta kuhna in the future. The first step has been done already: they are expanding the event to several other Slovenian cities. On the other side, the Chocolate Festival's core is the tradition, and the innovation factor could be a bit less important (at least from the product point of view), while its process and market innovation efforts (Krizaj, 2014) would still be relevant.

The Culinary Festival is heavily involved in other related events, and even though the event does not publicly indicate the specific potential or current motivation for further development, it probably has enough organizational and promotional support to keep it running in a successful way in the future. The organizers draw up a new thematic frame each year, but the festival is not tied to a specific tradition, nor has it developed follow-up projects or large-scale improvements.

From the media reach perspective, the Ljubljana Wine Route is a successful event, since it receives substantial foreign media exposure, as well as serving as an example of good practice found in the professional literature. An essential trait of the Ljubljana Wine Route is its importance in the promotion of Slovenia, since the event aims to present Slovenian cuisine, while the Culinary Festival is mostly focused on the presentation of general culinary specialities and skills.

Comparing the relative innovation potential among all four projects, we can confirm that Odprta kuhna has justifiably received (the only) two national tourism innovation-related awards. Their event occurs weekly for more than half of each year. They have managed to convince several upscale restaurants to offer street-food style versions of items from their sophisticated menus. They have expanded to several cities; they have created an (also) successful follow-up project; and they are starting to gain recognition as a stand-alone Slovene/Ljubljana attraction among domestic and foreign 'foodies' audiences.

As stated at the beginning, in the age of globalization and the world's rapid connectedness and technological progress, tourism providers are confronted with enormous opportunities, while operating in a highly competitive environment, as potential tourists choose from the increasingly homogenous offer from the whole world. One effective way to attract visitors on the levels of individual companies and the nation are attractive (incremental or radical) tourism innovations of the highest quality. However, today's innovations can rapidly lose their attraction status in the near future as users get used to the product while global competitors can be creating similar attractive offers as well. Thus, tourism providers in general have to ensure tempting marketing, high-quality delivery, continuous development and smart expansion of their core offer.

Since tourism is one of the most important sectors of the Slovenian economy, the responsibility for its development and maintaining competitiveness should not be left solely to the providers. The studied cases demonstrate substantial innovation potential, but they remain nonetheless fairly focused on the domestic market(ing). Their basic impact remains local (including serving and inviting foreign tourists that are already in Slovenia) while Slovene cuisine might contribute even more to a greater recognition of the country and also to generating more positive effects for the national tourism industry. Therefore, the main implication of this paper is that (according to current global trends) such events could therefore be more closely integrated into national strategies, and more focused support should be offered. As shown in the case analysis, the organizers of such events are micro-enterprises, which usually lack the necessary national-level organizational strengths for the continued development, promotion and delivery of tourism innovation to the global community. Already from the existing results, similar smaller tourism providers can obtain basic insights into examples of 'permanent innovation' approaches together with a wide array of promotion and activities of the analysed cases.

As for the limitations of the presented research, only a small fraction of Slovene tourism providers and events was analysed, leaning on the theoretical foundations about eventual hidden tourism innovations and suggested approaches towards thorough analyses of smaller tourism providers and segments. In the eventual succeeding research steps, a number of innovation attributes using publicly available data can be expanded to further develop the applied non-obtrusive research approach. The outcomes could be aligned with other similar segments, towards such events in other countries; and also towards the results of standard questionnaire surveys for all culinary events stakeholders. Particular attention should be given to analyses of correlations between such 'micro' events and national promotion and recognition, and benefits for all patrons involved in the emerging 'foodiescapes'.

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Restaurant Quality: A Cross-National Comparison between two Neighbouring North Mediterranean Tourist Destinations – Portorož and Opatija: Domestic Customers' Perspective

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The purpose of this paper is to investigate similarities and differences in the perceived quality on the part of domestic customers' in restaurants in Opatija (Croatia) and Portorož (Slovenia). Opatija and Portorož have a long common history, as they were important Austro-Hungarian and former Yugoslav North Mediterranean tourist destinations. These neighbouring and competitive tourist destinations now belong to two different European states: Slovenia and Croatia. In accordance with a previously conducted research in Opatija, research based on the same methodology was repeated in Piran. The Slovene and Croat sampling frames consisted of 156 valid questionnaires in each destination. Domestic customers that had eaten in restaurants were used as respondents. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine quality attributes that best explain customers' quality expectations and perceptions in both destinations. The study identified six attributes that best explain customers' expectations regarding service quality. Surprisingly, the research findings show similar (almost identical) crucial attributes in both destinations, as well as a negative quality gap, which results in poor and insufficient restaurant service quality. Restaurant managers should, therefore, emphasize the importance of identifying customers' expectations that significantly determine their business success and constantly measure their quality performance. This study is of great interest to managers, as its results may be implemented in restaurant and destination quality strategies. It would be of interest to see if similarities exist among other destinations that are decidedly different from those in Slovenia and Croatia.

Key words: Domestic customers, restaurant industry, service quality, DINESERV, Opatija, Portorož

Introduction

Understanding, achieving and maintaining service quality are recognized as important factors leading to the success of customer-focused firms. Knowing customers' expectations is instrumental in developing a quality strategy for meeting and exceeding their expectations. Consequently, the efforts of service managers and researchers are directed to understanding and measuring customers' expectations and the quality of services provided. In recent decades, many academics (Aigbedo & Parameswaran, 2004; Buttle, 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Oliver, 1980; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Hsieh & Yeh, 2014) have examined the concept of service quality, its dimensions and measurement methods. Among the various definitions proposed, the most widely used is the one that defines service quality as a gap between customers' expectations and perceptions (Sivakumar, Li & Dong, 2014). Providers should, therefore, meet or exceed customers' expectations in order to deliver high-quality services. Based on this definition, there is a variety of measurement techniques for assessing service quality. One of the most widely used is the SERVQUAL instrument (Parasumaran, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). In restaurant facilities, quality is usually measured with an adapted version of the SERVQUAL instrument: the DINESERV model (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995). Many researchers have used DINESERV in their studies (Bougoure & Neu, 2010; Keith & Simmers, 2011; Kim, Ng, & Kim, 2009, Marković, Raspor & Šegarić, 2010). In accordance with Marković, Raspor and Šegarić's (2010) study, the DINESERV methodology is also applied in our study.

Service quality is important not only for the business success of restaurants themselves, but also plays a major role in the way tourists experience the destination (Križman Pavlović & Živolić, 2008). In this direction, increasing numbers of Destination Marketing Campaigns (DMC) are now focusing on the food element as a central part of their destination tourism product (Sukiman, Omar, Muhibudin, Yussof & Mohamed, 2013). In order to answer our main research question (listed below), this research was carried out in the Municipality of Piran (the Portorož Riviera), and its results have been compared to the results of a previously conducted research in Opatija (the Opatija Riviera).

The Portorož Riviera and the Opatija Riviera are two of the most recognizable tourist destinations in the Eastern Adriatic. Based on their unique potential (i.e. the longest tradition of organized tourism and the formerly most elite Mediterranean destinations of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and ex-Yugoslavia), both destinations are still considered as some of the most visited tourist destinations in Slovenia and Croatia. Both destinations are famous among Slovenes and Croats, although according to official statistical reports (stat.si, 2013; dzs.hr, 2013) foreign tourists prevail in both destinations. Slovene tourists (according to total foreign tourist arrivals) occupy the second position in Croatia and tourists from Croatia are the fourth most numerous tourists in Slovenia (stat.si, 2013; dzs.hr, 2013). In order to upgrade their current market situation, in 2011 both destinations jointly applied for EU funding and started the "365 Days of the Riviera cross-border project". The project aims are to improve the destinations' recognisability and encourage the arrival of tourists throughout the year. This encourages cross-border collaboration and makes it possible to design joint products and marketing activities, enabling each destination to keep and emphasize its distinctive features, while simultaneously benefitting from the advantages of joint, cross-border marketing activities. Benefits from the project will be given to all stakeholders in both destinations (365.danariviere.eu, 2013). The project (365.danariviere) primarily focuses on strategic marketing guidelines and, prior to its development process, no studies were conducted to evaluate customers' expectations and perceptions of quality on the 'micro-operational' level. This study specifically examines restaurant customers' expectations in both destinations and seeks to identify how various quality attributes match these expectations. It does this by applying the DINESERV model, which measures the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions (customers' experience of various service attributes) to determine their level of satisfaction with the quality of restaurant service.

Based on the literature review, we formulated the main research question: Are there similarities in domestic customers' quality expectations and perceptions in both destinations? This paper is divided into several sections. First, a brief review of service quality is provided. Next, a research methodology is presented; followed by a presentation and discussion of results. In the conclusion, suggestions for future research and useful information for restaurant managers are provided.

Literature Review

Because of their inherent intangibility, the delivery of high-quality services is a difficult task. Therefore, the service provider (caterer) needs standardized, quantitative measurements to assess service quality. The specification of service quality attributes should be identified within standardized models, because this helps managers to better understand the components of service quality. Quantitative models (presented below) are essentially developed around the concept of satisfaction. Although there are many definitions of satisfaction, it is generally recognized as a post-purchase construct that is related to how a consumer likes or dislikes a service after experiencing it (Truong & Foster, 2006). Regarding the restaurant industry, this post-purchase construct is primarily a function of pre-dining expectations and experiences. As suggested by Oliver (1980), an individual's expectations are confirmed when a service performs as expected, negatively when the service performs worse than expected, and positively when the service performs better than expected (also referred to as ECT or Oliver's Expectation Disconfirmation Theory). Based on this specification, restaurant managers can use different models to measure and implement necessary policies for quality improvement.

The SERVQUAL instrument, as one of the most popular models, consists of 22 items (Rood & Dziadkowiec, 2011). The instrument measures the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of the service they received. The 22 statements represent the five service dimensions that consumers use to evaluate service quality: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness (also known as the RATER quality dimensions). Although many researchers (Buttle, 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005; Llosa, Chandon & Orsingher, 1998) have questioned the reliability of the five service dimensions, SERVQUAL remains one of the most widely used methods. Many authors have applied SERVQUAL to specific service sectors (Choi & Chu, 1999; Ekinci & Riley, 1999; Tribe & Snaith, 1998, Yuksel & Rimmington, 1998). In an effort to adapt SERVQUAL to the hospitality industry, many researchers have modified the original model and developed specific models for the hotel industry, such as LODGQUAL (Getty & Thompson, 1994); LODGSERV (Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990); SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1994), and DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995) for the restaurant industry.

The original DINESERV instrument included 40 service quality items. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to refine the instrument. The final version includes 29 items captured into the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument. Reliability was found to be the most important dimension, followed by tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy. The first serious discussions and analyses of the SERVQUAL instrument emerged during the 1990s. Bojanic and Rosen (1994) used the SERVQUAL instrument to evaluate service quality in a chain restaurant. They specifically indicated that it was difficult for customers to fill out two different questionnaires: before and after dining. The results identified the three most significant dimension that best explain overall restaurant quality: knowing the customer (empathy); reliability; and assurance. Other SERVQUAL dimensions were statistically not significant. Johns and Tyas (1996) employed the SERVQUAL instrument to evaluate the performance of a contract catering service. They used 24 items from the SERVQUAL and added 12 specific items related to the quality of food and value for money. Johns and Tyas did not confirm the same dimensions as those in the SERVQUAL instrument, as other factors related to food and personnel were found to be more important.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on service quality. Fu and Parks (2001) analysed the correlation between the SERVQUAL quality dimensions and restaurant loyalty among elderly customers at two family-type restaurants. The major findings were that friendly service and individual attention were the most important factors that influence elderly customers' behavioural intentions. Andaleeb and Conway (2006) examined the service dimensions that best explain customer satisfaction in full-service restaurants. The results indicated that customer satisfaction was influenced mostly by the responsiveness of the frontline employees, followed by price and food quality. The results are not generalizable because different guest samples in different geographic areas may have different requirements for restaurants. Some studies have confirmed the importance of different quality dimensions in different restaurant settings: food (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Kim, Ng, & Kim, 2009); people (Voon, 2012; Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012), ambiance (Ryu & Jang, 2007). These findings may aid in understanding the distinct aspects of the restaurant and tourism industry. According to Andaleeb and Conway (2006) and Aigbedo and Parameswaran (2004), the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument have not been fully validated. These authors (ibid.) have, therefore, proposed further scientific research. These findings corroborate the ideas of Jensen and Hansen (2007) and Juwaheer (2004), who suggested a modified approach to service quality measurement: the number of service dimensions should be adjusted to each specific study. As the generalizability of SERVQUAL is problematic, these findings indicate that the SERVQUAL instrument should be used only as a basic framework for measuring service quality. This view is also supported by Nowacki (2005), who used the SERVQUAL instrument in order to evaluate service quality in a museum setting. Although SERVQUAL was primarily designed and used to measure the service quality of a specific service provider (e.g. restaurant, hotel, etc.), Sukiman et al. (2013) used the SERVQUAL methodology to measure tourist satisfaction in a tourist destination in Malaysia. Although fixed dimensions originally identified by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry are not necessarily applicable to all situations (especially those associated with destinations), according to Sukiman et al. (2013) a modified approach based on sector specific attributes can assess the quality of services in a specific sector of tourism. Its major strength is the gap measurement of specific quality attributes (the disconfirmation model) as it aids in understanding which quality attributes have contributed to customers' satisfaction. Despite its diagnostic success, to date no study has investigated and compared restaurant quality in two neighbouring and competitive tourist destinations.

Methodology

This study examined restaurant quality using an adapted version of the SERVQUAL instrument, named DINESERV. The research instrument used in this study comprises 35 restaurant attributes (quality attributes are presented in Table 2). The levels of customers' expectations and perceptions are measured on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Mean scores for each attribute are determined by both expectations and perceptions. The difference between mean scores for each quality attribute gives a quantitative measure of the restaurant service quality. The methodology and research design are based on Marković, Raspor and Šegarić's (2010) research, which measured customers' expectations and perceptions in 32 restaurant settings on the Opatija Riviera during April 2007, based on a modified DINESERV approach. As respondents in their research were domestic customers, we had to consider that factor in our study as well.

Our study was conducted during a three-week period in April 2014. The research was performed by students of the Faculty of Tourism Studies Portorož, whose fieldwork was thoroughly supervised by lecturers. Questionnaires were distributed in 32 restaurant settings in Piran to 156 domestic customers. The number of restaurants (different Food & Beverage facilities) independently operating in the municipality of Piran in 2012 was 172 (Kukanja & Planinc, 2013). We used convenience sampling and covered 19% of the population. The research was conducted using the direct interviewing of customers before and after dining in different facilities. Customers were invited to complete the questionnaire before and after the service encounter. According to the surveyors, some customers refused to participate in the study for a variety of reasons. The final analysis is therefore based on 156 valid questionnaires. The SPSS program was used for the analysis of the results. Descriptive statistics analysis was used to describe respondents' demographic characteristics and to evaluate service quality expectations and perceptions in both destinations. To assess the factor structure, two exploratory factor analyses were performed. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to derive the underlying dimensions of service quality. As in Marković, Raspor and Šegarić's (2010) study, items with eigenvalues equal or greater than 1, factor loadings above 0.4, and factors that contain less than three items were retained. To test the inner reliability of the scale and the inner consistency of extracted factors, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated (factor and reliability analysis are presented in Tables 3 and 4).

Results and Discussion

In the first step of the analysis, descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyse and compare respondents' basic demographic characteristics. In Table 1, the comparison of some basic socio-demographic data from both studies (Opatija and Portorož) is presented. As can be seen from the table below, in the case of Piran the majority of respondents fell into the 26–35-year group, and the majority of respondents had completed secondary school.

In the next step, differences between domestic customers' expectations and perceptions in both destinations were analysed. To analyse the service quality gap, arithmetic means for all quality attributes (expectations and perceptions) were calculated. In Table 2, differences between customers' expectations, perceptions, and the service quality gaps for both destinations are highlighted.

The comparison of results reveals that expectations in both destinations are rated relatively high: Opatija (5.85) and Piran (5.64). In both destinations, the highest rated expectations attribute is 'accurate bill' (6.62 in Opatija and 6.42 in Piran), and the lowest rated attribute is 'paying more than planned' (4.22 in Opatija and 3.92 in Piran). Interestingly, similarities were also found when comparing perception attributes in both destinations. The highest rated (perceived) quality attribute is also bill accuracy (6.30 in both destinations), while the lowest rated quality attribute is 'paying more than planned' (3.84 in Opatija and 3.62 in Piran). The comparison of results reveals that customers in both destinations have the highest expectations regarding bill accuracy and the lowest expectations regarding overpaying the bill. It can thus be suggested that customers expect an accurate (fair) bill, and they have low expectations regarding paying more than planned (according to these data, we can infer that customers are somehow 'not afraid' of overpaying for the meal). Therefore, these results need to be interpreted with caution. As perception means for the two attributes are lower in both destinations (see Table 2), it can be assumed that the bills in both destinations were inaccurate and customers' overpaid for their meal.

Some of the issues emerging from these findings could be related specifically to the tax policy in both destinations. Tax inefficiency in tourism represented one of the major fiscal problems in both destinations (Bratić, Bejaković & Devčić, 2012; Kosi & Bojnec, 2010). The governments of both countries (Croatia in 2012, followed by the government of Slovenia in 2015) implemented a set of measures (cash transactions fiscalization) in order to assure an overview

Table 1 Socio-demographic data

Items		Socio-demographic data	
		Percentage	
		Opatija	Piran
Gender	Male	50.6	51.9
	Female	49.4	48.1
Level of education	Primary school	1.3	3.8
	Secondary school	42.3	55.1
	College and university	44.9	28.8
	MSc or PhD	11.5	2.6
Age	16-25	21.8	44.9
	26-35	17.3	20.5
	36-45	27.6	12.2
	46-55	15.4	10.9
	56-65	10.3	7.1
	66 and above	7.7	4.5

Study conducted in Opatija (Marković, Raspor, & Šegarić, 2010; Study conducted in Piran in 2014 (own research).

Table 2 Expectation - perception mean and DINESERV quality gap

Quality attributes	Expectation mean		Perception mean		DINESERV	
	Opatija	Piran	Opatija	Piran	Opatija	Piran
V14 - Accurate bill	6.62	6.42	6.30	6.30	-0.39	-0.12
V8 - Clean rest rooms	6.52	6.39	5.47	5.75	-1.05	-0.64
V3 - Clean, neat and appropriately dressed staff	6.49	6.32	5.81	5.80	-0.68	-0.52
V9 - Clean dining areas	6.46	6.30	5.66	5.58	-0.80	-0.72
V15 - Error-free served order (food)	6.42	6.28	5.92	6.05	-0.50	-0.23
V20 - Comfortable and confident feeling	6.35	5.92	5.64	5.63	-0.71	-0.29
V23 - Well-trained, competent and experienced staff	6.32	5.83	5.65	5.62	-0.67	-0.21
V21 – Staff provide information about menu items, their ingredients, and method of preparation	6.31	5.56	5.61	5.47	-0.70	-0.09
V13 - Dependable and consistent restaurant	6.30	6.04	5.57	5.80	-0.73	-0.24
V4 - Restaurant's decor typical to its image and price range	6.29	5.98	5.78	5.77	-0.51	-0.21
V12 - Quick correction of wrong service	6.27	5.82	5.54	5.43	-0.73	-0.39
V7 - Comfortable dining area	6.25	6.03	5.55	5.64	-0.70	-0.39
V29 - Customers' best interests at heart	6.25	5.85	5.51	5.35	-0.74	-0.50
V5 - Easily readable menu	6.24	6.14	5.97	5.94	-0.30	-0.20
V2 - Visually attractive dining area	6.23	5.71	5.33	5.37	-0.90	-0.34
V10 - Comfortable seats in the dining room	6.17	5.82	5.37	5.22	-0.80	-0.60
V17 - Provision of prompt service	6.14	5.45	5.57	5.44	-0.57	-0.01
V24 - Restaurant supports the employees	6.13	5.82	5.54	5.40	-0.59	-0.42
V11 - Service in the promised time	6.12	5.82	5.61	5.53	-0.51	-0.29
V19 - Employees can answer questions completely	6.10	5.42	5.62	5.45	-0.48	0.03
V6 - Visually attractive menu	6.06	5.61	5.69	5.67	-0.37	0.06
V25 - Employees provide individual attention	6.06	5.12	5.62	5.17	-0.44	0.05
V34 - Recommending the restaurant to others	6.04	5.53	5.60	5.59	-0.44	0.06
V35 - Excellent quality of service	6.01	5.63	5.69	5.78	-0.32	0.15

Quality attributes	Expectation mean		Perception mean		DINESERV	
	Opatija	Piran	Opatija	Piran	Opatija	Piran
V1 - Visually attractive parking areas and building exteriors	5.97	5.81	4.99	5.02	-0.98	-0.79
V22 - Feeling safe	5.97	5.60	5.59	5.58	-0.38	-0.02
V26 - Special feeling	5.97	5.21	5.51	5.02	-0.46	-0.19
V16 - Maintaining speed and quality of service during busy times	5.94	5.62	5.19	5.11	-0.75	-0.51
V18 - Extra effort for handling special requests	5.94	5.47	5.51	5.35	-0.43	-0.12
V32 - Overall satisfaction with dining experience	5.86	5.29	5.57	5.60	-0.29	0.31
V28 - Sympathetic and reassuring employees	5.80	5.57	5.43	5.32	-0.73	-0.25
V33 - Returning to the restaurant	5.78	5.51	5.58	5.79	-0.20	0.28
V27 - Anticipation of customers' individual needs and wants	5.46	4.70	5.21	4.81	-0.25	0.11
V30 - Expensive food items	4.36	4.04	4.16	4.23	-0.20	0.19
V31 - Paying more than planned	4.22	3.92	3.84	3.62	-0.38	-0.30
Overall mean for 35 attributes	5.85	5.64	5.49	5.43	-0.36	-0.21

of cash transaction revenues. Based on the new Cash Transaction Fiscalization Act, fiscal cash registers (online connected registers to the Ministry of Finance) were introduced in both countries (fiscalization.hr, 2015; uradni-list.si, 2015). Nevertheless, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before the association between tax policies, and quality is more clearly understood. However, these results are not very encouraging as they indicate poor and insufficient restaurant quality. As can be seen from Table 2, the overall quality level is slightly better in the case of Piran (-0.21), where in comparison to Opatija (-0.36) several quality attributes have a positive gap score (V19, V6, V25, V34, V35, V32, V33, V27, V30). Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between domestic customers quality expectations and perceptions in both destinations.

In the next section of the study, two exploratory factor analyses were performed to assess the factor structure of customers' expectations and perceptions in Piran. The results obtained from both factor analyses were then compared with results of the analysis conducted in Opatija.

In the first step of the research, the factor structure of customers' expectations in Piran was analysed. The Varimax method was used since we have attempted to ensure that every observed variable has a high factor weight at only one factor (the same approach was also utilized in Opatija's study). In our research, the exploratory factor analysis produced a seven-factor solution that explains 60 percent of the variance in the data. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients range from 0.710 to 0.900, while factor five (F5) has only two attributes and was omitted from further analysis (see Table 3). Since we have adopted the same methodology as previously done by Marković, Raspor and Šegarić (2010), the same terminology was also implemented for labelling quality factors. The extracted (expectation) factors in our research are: F1 – cleanliness and appearance of facilities and staff (V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V9, V10, V15); F2 – individual attention (V17, V18, V19, V25, V26, V27); F3 –

assurance (V20, V22, V23, V24, V28, V29); F4 – satisfaction and loyalty (V32, V33, V34, V35); F6 – responsiveness (V11, V12, V13); and F7 – reliability (V14, V21, V16). The results obtained from the exploratory factor analysis (Piran) are summarized in Table 3.

In Opatija, the exploratory factor analysis produced a seven-factor solution, which explains 77 percent of the variance in the data. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients in Opatija ranged from 0.721 to 0.924. The extracted factors were (Marković, Raspor, & Šegarić, 2010): F1 – cleanliness and appearance of facilities and staff; F2 – assurance; F3 – individual attention; F4 – satisfaction and loyalty; F5 – basic demands; F6 - responsiveness; F7 – reliability. The comparison of the two results reveals that domestic customers in both destinations have similar (practically the same) quality expectations (possible explanations are discussed below).

The next section of the survey was concerned with perception analysis. The factor analysis in our research (Piran) extracted six factors, which explained 61.708 percent of the total variance in the data. The fifth (F5) quality factor contains only two variables and the sixth (F6) factor contains only one variable, so they were omitted from further analysis. Based on the factor and reliability analysis presented in the table below (Table 4), it is evident that customers' perception of quality is mainly based on the quality of the following factors: F1 – assurance (V18, V19, V20, V21, V22, V23, V24, V25, V26, V27, V28, V29); F2 – restaurant ambiance (V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V9); F3 – responsiveness (V11, V12, V13, V14, V15, V16, V17); and F4 – satisfaction and loyalty (V32, V33, V34, V35). Based on these four quality dimensions and the values of their total explained variances (see Table 4), it is clearly evident that they are important in assuring domestic customers' quality perceptions in Piran. The results obtained from the exploratory factor analysis for the perception scale (Piran) are summarised in Table 4.

Table 3 Factor and reliability analysis for expectation scale (Piran)

Scale	Factors	Number of items	% of variance	Cronbach's alpha
Expectation scale	F1	11	15.067	0.900
	F2	6	11.008	0.857
	F3	6	9.002	0.844
	F4	4	8.165	0.869
	F5	2	7.689	-
	F6	3	4.830	0.781
	F7	3	4.305	0.710

Table 4 Factor and reliability analysis for the perception scale (Piran)

Scale	Factors	Number of variables	% of variance	Cronbach's alpha
Perception scale	F1	12	21.175	0.944
	F2	9	12.900	0.886
	F3	7	10.588	0.871
	F4	4	9.022	0.923
	F5	2	4.904	-
	F6	1	3.119	-

Turning to the results of the Opatija research, it can be seen that based on their analysis, only two factors were extracted: F1 (overall dining experience) and F2 (restaurant ambiance). The comparison of results (Piran vs. Opatija) reveals that F2 (ambiance) coincides with our research, while special attention has to be focused on the first quality factor (overall dining experience). A more thorough and in-depth analysis of the interpretation used to describe results obtained in the Opatija study reveals that in order to better explain customers' perceptions of service quality, authors (Marković, Raspor and Šegarić, 2010) merged several (perceived) quality variables in a new quality dimension, named 'overall dining experience'. According to these authors (ibid.), this dimension comprises all aspects of restaurant service, including the appearance of the dining area, staff knowledge and courtesy, the ability to perform error-free service at promised time, providing individual attention, as well as customers' safety and satisfaction. In the Opatija research, this dimension was composed of the following variables (V20, V26, V19, V27, V18, V35, V25, V21, V32, V28, V23, V34, V22, V24, V29, V17, V13, V33, V12, V2, V16, and V11). As authors have decided to implement a new quality dimension for a better interpretation of quality perceptions, we had to consider that in our study as well. According to this perspective, we can see that the majority of perceived quality attributes identified in our study can be included (and interpreted) through the new 'overall dining experience' quality dimension. Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between domestic customers' perceptions in both tourist destinations.

The most striking result to emerge from the data is that the overall level of restaurant quality in both destinations is negative (unsatisfactory). Another important finding was that customers in both destinations have practically the same expectations and perceptions regarding restaurant quality attributes (see Table 2). The comparison of results shows that domestic customers in both destinations evaluate overall restaurant service quality based on similar (almost the same) quality attributes. There are several possible explanations for these (similar) results. Firstly, the respondents were domestic visitors. As both countries have been independent for only 22 years, the majority of respondents (or their parents) grew up in the same, common federal and socialist state of Yugoslavia and have passed the same common (socialist) values on to their children. There also might be some other possible explanations for these results, such as a common Slavic culture, predominant Roman Catholicism in both destinations, the Mediterranean 'way of life', the same educational system in the former (Yugoslav) state, and others. However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before restaurant service quality in both destinations is more clearly understood. These findings have important implications for future quality and development strategies in both tourist destinations.

Conclusions and Implications

Returning to the research question posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that there are similarities in domestic customers' quality expectations and perceptions in both destinations. This study has identified the crucial quality dimensions that best explain restaurant quality expectations (cleanliness and appearance of facilities and staff; assurance; individual attention; satisfaction and loyalty; basic demands; responsiveness and reliability) and quality perceptions (overall dining experience and restaurant ambience) in both destinations. These findings enhance our understanding of restaurant quality in two neighbouring and competitive tourist destinations.

Moreover, the research conducted in Piran identified the same crucial quality dimensions as the previous research conducted in Opatija, where restaurant quality had been measured before the economic crisis in 2009. It can, therefore, be assumed that the economic crisis did not have any influence on domestic customers' quality expectations and perceptions. The research has also shown that the level of overall restaurant quality in both destinations is unsatisfactory. Therefore, it can also be assumed that Slovene customers in Opatija are dissatisfied with their (Croatian) restaurants (and vice versa).

The findings of this study have important implications for future practice as they provide clear information about restaurant quality in both destinations. Once customers' expectations are identified, restaurant managers must strive to fulfil these expectations. The key policy priority should, therefore, be to plan quality improvements in both destinations (e.g. the implementation of quality management systems, training and educational programs, exchange of best practices, etc.). This study has also found that the cooperation between restaurant providers and academics (regarding research into restaurant quality) is generally weak in both neighbouring destinations. As restaurants represent an important segment of a destination's facility and services, restaurant quality should be regularly evaluated.

A number of possible future studies using the same experimental structure are recommended. It would be interesting to assess restaurant quality in other neighbouring and competitive North Mediterranean tourist destinations such as Venice, Italy and/or other cities of the Istrian peninsula. Finally, a number of significant limitations need to be considered: the study is based only on domestic customers; customers (tourists) from the major foreign sending (emitive) markets (Germany and Italy) were not included in the research; service quality in different types of F&B facilities (such as 'Konobe', inns, guesthouses, etc.) was not evaluated; facilities that operate within hotels (half- and full-board restaurants) were not included in the study; paired *t*-statistics was not measured as we do not possess primary (raw) statistic databases of both research studies. To develop a full picture of restaurant quality in both destinations, additional studies are needed. More research is needed to better understand whether (and how) the tax legislation influences customers' perceptions of specific quality attributes. Regarding directions for future research, further work could also investigate restaurant service providers' perceptions of customers' expectations (the perception gap). Therefore, it is suggested that these limitations be taken into account in future studies. Nevertheless, DINESERV proved to be a useful diagnostic tool that can be easily applied to future restaurant and destination quality management strategies.

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PageRank Grade Evaluation of Independent Slovenian Restaurant Websites

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When considering Slovenian independent restaurants, whether they understand the importance of their websites must be determined. A neglected marketing strategy, a restaurant website, in this case, is a path towards disconnection with customers and means lost profits. The authors of this paper decided to perform a simple evaluation of how good their websites are in terms of the PageRank algorithm, which defines search engine page results. Using the PageRank checker, comparison among best gourmet restaurants 2013 of the city of Ljubljana in Slovenia (according to the 'In Your Pocket' city guide) was made. Low grades reveal a lack of investment in the field of search engine optimization.

Key words: Evaluation, Website, Independent Slovenian restaurant, PageRank

Introduction

The rapid development of information technology and the Internet has dramatically changed the tourism industry (Ho & Lee, 2007). The Internet can serve as an effective marketing tool in tourism (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Having an effective website has become vital for a business to strengthen its customer relationships and gain a larger market segment. HeBS digital research from 2013 (A Restaurateur's Guide to Successful Digital Marketing) states that restaurant sales are climbing and is crucial to maintaining an online presence. According to AIS Media (2012), 89 per cent of diners research restaurants online before visiting in person. Increasingly, people want to fully understand the restaurant's menu, services and pricing before the visit. They are disappointed when they realize that the restaurant website does not provide up-to-date menus, drink lists or cannot accept online reservations. Even if the restaurant provides that, there is a question of visibility. Missing out on website visibility in search engine page results means lost profit.

Website visibility could be defined as search engine optimization (SEO), as it is understood as a process of getting 'free' traffic from the organic search results on search engines. All widely used search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) have organic search results, according to which web pages are shown in an orderly manner based on what the search engine objectively considers more relevant. Organic search results are 'free' in contrast to paid search ads. This does not mean that organic search results are totally free, and it is at this point that SEO becomes relevant. The process of SEO requires constant website updating, appropriate tags, a logical website structure, appropriate coding of the website, backlinks, interaction, titles and description, as well as domains and URLs, and other factors.

Google uses the algorithm called PageRank that grades how well some web pages are optimized for their search engine. PageRank mechanically defines rank of websites in Google's search engine as it measures the importance of websites and their web pages. A high position in search results means that the PageRank recognizes a website as a valuable asset that represents the quality and trust of a reader (a consequence of a good SEO). The PageRank algorithm is extremely complex, but in simple terms it could be defined as the process of SEO. In other words, it measures the human interest and, therefore, defines the order of the web (Page et al., 1999). Usability and user experience vary in different cultures and countries but do not affect PageRank, meaning that it is a highly appropriate method for comparing websites.

The restaurant business requires constant progress, fresh local and seasonal menus, good visualization of food and beverages, promotional coupons, sweepstakes, events and promotion (offline and online). We decided to check the PageRank of the best Slovenian restaurant homepages in order to see how good they are. We chose the best independent gourmet restaurants in 2013 in Ljubljana (capital of Slovenia) published by the 'In Your Pocket' city guide

We discovered that some of the best independent restaurants in Slovenia had websites with low PageRank grades. Perhaps, we can connect this finding with the fact that the large majority of restaurants are small or medium enterprises. The common problem of SME's is a lack of resources for R&D and their ability to innovate (Križaj, Brodnik & Bukovec, 2014). Therefore independent restaurants (restaurants not owned by a hotel or a chain of hotels) cannot afford big marketing budgets, which is reflected in the quality of their websites.

When searching for similar research in Slovenia, we discovered that the research field has been neglected and needs more complex and thorough research.

Literature Review

There are different methodological approaches towards website analysis. Some use multi-criteria decision making, such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the Preference-Ranking Organization Method for Enrichment Evaluations (PROMETHEE) (Akincilar, Dagdeviren, 2014), others a multi-dimensional approach (Tanjunga, Dhewantob 2013), rubric comparison (Dion, Woodside, 2010), in-depth content analysis (Salavati, Hashim, 2015), a two-stage DEA model (Yanga, Shib, Wanga & Yan, 2014); the modified scorecard approach (traces the use of the approach from its beginning in 1999 to the present time), formative and summative evaluation (Morrison, Taylor & Douglas, 2008) and even more orthodox approached adopted an architectural criteria approach used in the evaluation of buildings (Hong & Kim, 2004). All of the mentioned approaches are complex in nature and provide in-depth overviews of which website is performing better or worse across different industries.

We searched for Slovenian literature that would research or evaluate Slovenian restaurant websites. We found some research on hotel websites using the Mann-Whitney U test (Roblek, Štok & Meško, 2013) directed towards the difference of information of three and four star hotels in Gorenjska region, websites of travel agencies in connection with safety and the keywords they use (Mekinc & Cvikl, 2011), and whether they are used as a primary marketing channel (Kribl & Bojnec, 2007). We found that the re2 search in the field of tourism-related websites was surprisingly weak, especially with restaurant webs sites. There are organizations that deal with the website quality and performance (those of tourism and other industries) such as E-laborat (www.e-laborat.si), which provide detailed insight into website performance and how to improve them. They are prom fessionals, and they provide information based on a fee and do not disclose details. They have a magazine that discusses best practices (Najboljše spletne prakse, 2014), but they are not connected strictly with tourism and do not provide tangible data for a more scientific approach.

Methodology

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the basis of every website. Consequently, the websites we study had to be optimized in order to obtain a higher Pagi eRank grade, which means higher visibility. There are many ways to determine which website is better as discussed in the literature review. In order to check the quality of the restaurant website, we decided to use a very simple (we can say indicative) approach using PageRank checker. In this manner, we will obtain a basic insight into the quality of selectsed websites.

Google defines PageRank algorithm as (Google guide 2015):

> PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. In essence, Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyses the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves 'important' weigh more heavily and help to make other pages 'important.'

In other words, Google conducts 'elections' in which each web page casts votes for web pages with hyperlinks to those pages. However, unlike a delmocracy, a page can have more than one vote, and links from pages with high PageRank are given more weight (according to their ranking) and thus help to improve the targets PageRank.'

PageRank checker (http://www.prchecker.info) will provide us with a grade of Slovene and English home pages of selected restaurants (1 meaning very poor, 10 meaning excellent).

Research

The 'In Your Pocket' city guide (www.inyourpocket.com) held a contest for the best restaurants in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia in 2013. People were able to vote for their favourite restaurant in nine different categories (Gourmet, Slovenian cuisine, Business lunches, Balkan cuisine, International cuisine, Best pizzeria, Student meals, Delivery services, and a special category for restaurants that are in the vicinity of Ljubljana). We decided to take a closer look at winners of the gourmet category (JB, Manna, As, Špajza, Cubo, Valvas'or, Pri Levu, Strelec, Vander, and Maxim). We excluded restaurants that were not independent (Pri Levu, Strelec, Vander, and Maxim). Listed below are the PageRank grade of Slovene and English homepages of independent restaurants.

PageRank grades of all the websites are quite low. The highest grade was only four out ten meaning that

Table 1 PageRank grades of the best independent gourmet restaurants in 2013 in Ljubljana according to 'In Your Pocket'

	Slovene home page		English home page	
Restaurant	URL address	PageRank	URL address	PageRank
JB	http://www.jb-slo.com/sl	3	http://www.jb-slo.com/en	4
Manna	http://www.restavracija-manna.si	2	http://www.restaurant-manna.com	N/A
As	http://www.gostilnaas.si	4	http://www.gostilnaas.si/home	N/A
Špajza	http://www.spajza-restaurant.si	3	http://www.spajza-restaurant.si/en	3
Cubo	http://www.cubo-ljubljana.com/sl	4	http://www.cubo-ljubljana.com/en	3
Valvas'or	http://valvasor.net	2	http://valvasor.net/?lang=en	1

SEO was poorly performed and needs improvement. PageRank checker could not grade some restaurant websites. According to www.prchecker.info followsing reasons are the problem; 1) the web page is new, and it is not indexed by Google yet, 2) the web page is indexed by Google, but it is not ranked yet, 3) the web page was indexed by Google long ago, but it is recognized as a supplemental (supplemental results) page, 4) the web page or the whole website is banned by Google.

We cannot determine which of the reason or reasons are to blame. Further research and analysis would be needed in order to point out the exact reason.

Conclusion

When attempting to determine whether Slovene independent restaurants are aware of the importance of the visibility of their websites, we can assert that they have a limited understanding of how a good website works. We would need to dig deeper and with a larger sample to discover whether this is applicable throughout the independent restaurant business. Further research should comprise more complex graders such as alexa.com, compete.com, grader.com, and many others, which provide more information, such as keywords, time spent, bounce rate, pageviews, audience demographics and other metrics. The problem with such approach could be that some checkers/graders would not be able to grade all the websites, similar to PageRank checker.

A comparison between Slovene independent and dependent (restaurants that are part of hotels or chains) using PageRank checker could also be a prospect for further research. It would be interesting to run a similar study with a sample of independent restaurants from other countries to see if there is a difference.

We can say (even with such basic and simple research) that independent restaurants lack understanding of the importance of their website. The latter could be connected with a lack of resources and investments which is a common issue for site managers. There is also a large gap with regards to existing research material on Slovenian restaurants upon which we could build and learn. This simple research identifies that there is a need for more complex research that could provide further insights.

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Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation

Staiff, Russell, Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation. Enchanting the Past-Future. Surrey Ashgate, 2014, 194 pages. Hardcover: ISBN 978-1-4094-5550-9. Ebook: PDF 978-1-4094-5551-6.

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> 'Those who do not expect the unexpected will not find it…' (Staiff, 2014: 1)

There have been quite a few reviews of Staiff's new book published in heritage and museum journals this year. However, this book challenges traditional approaches to heritage interpretation to such an extent that it should be valued from the tourism innovation viewpoint as well. Russell Staiff suggests that the 'digital revolution' has changed forever the way that people interact with their environment and that a new approach to heritage interpretation is needed. Nevertheless, this book 'is not a heritage interpretation manual […] it is not about effective communication techniques or how tourists and visitors learn things at heritage places' (p. 3). Rooting itself in cultural and representation studies it rather broadens our conceptual understanding of heritage interpretation to more fully recognize it as a process of meaning-making.

The book is structured thematically into eight main chapters framed as a series of 'interlocking mediations' (p. 25): (1) Anecdotes and observations; (2) Tilden: beyond resurrection; (3) The somatic and the aesthetic: embodied heritage experiences; (4) Visual cultures: imagining and knowing through looking; (5) Narratives and narrativity: the story is the thing; (6) Digital media and social networking; (7) Conversing across cultures; (8) Enchantment, wonder, and other raptures: imaginings outside didacticism.

In the first chapter, the author immediately draws attention to the advent of digital technologies vis à vis heritage interpretation. Through his first question, regarding whether or not digital media is changing heritage interpretation, Staiff reveals a series of heritage tourism-related issues. To mention a few: the heritage experience and its relationship to the tourism experience; the way heritage interpretation is knitted into tourism as visual culture; the problems associated with cross-culture translation; and the heritage interpretation and tourism promotion practices associated with digital media. Through his observations and anecdotes, the author argues that the transition has been made from conceptualizing interpretation as an education activity to defining it as a communication process. He claims that 'heritage interpretation orthodoxy' (p.9) has reached its limits with digital technologies and advances in thinking about the heritage/tourist experience (p. 10). The author's personal observations and anecdotes provide food for thought in terms of how heritage is all about the reasons tourists feel attached to places, sites, and objects, and also how digital technologies have altered the creation of organic destination images (e.g. Venice, sites in Thailand). The growth of digital technologies gives visitors access to a range of alternative interpretations of a heritage site. 'Heritage becomes a dynamic entity, not a stable category […] Heritage is something we do, rather than something that is' (p. 2). All heritage sites, even completely unknown to a tourist, already carry certain expectations and ideas about what it is he/she may find at the end of the trip, claims the author. 'Russell Staiff's book has provoked so many thoughts relating to heritage interpretation and we are only at page 17,' quipped Engelsman (2015). We can also view the first chapter as being thought-provoking for the field of tourism studies, especially in terms of communication technologies and communication theories.

Although Staiff criticizes the information-processing approach to interpretation, he, being an art historian, stays firmly within communication theories, advocating the semiotic traditions of communication as the process of sharing meanings (see Griffin et al., 2015; Silverman, 1995). What is genuinely fresh in Staiff's 'new theorisations of the heritage encounter' (Duncan, 2015) is that the author sees the visitor not as a passive receiver of established knowledge but, instead, 'as a reflexive agent in dialogue with heritage places within an encounter which involves far more than simply informal education' (Duncan, 2015). In further chapters, Staiff explores these ideas about the relationships between heritage places and their visitors. His main questions are: why is a consideration of where meaning resides, inside or outside material objects, so important to heritage interpretation, why is meaning-making as a representational system important to heritage interpretation, and why is didacticism so difficult in a system characterized by flux and constant shifts in meaning.

Most books about heritage interpretation start with Freeman Tilden, and Staiff does likewise. However, 'Staiff comes not to praise but to bury' Tilden's conception (Duncan, 2015). He criticized Tilden's belief that there is a 'hidden' meaning behind the materiality of physical objects, which is known to the interpreter but not to the visitor. Rejecting the cybernetic (so-called 'technical') tradition of communication in heritage interpretation, Staiff argues that meaning does not lie in objects themselves but is co-created by the interpreter and visitor within a particular historical and cultural frame of reference. Furthermore, interpretation can be conceptualized as 'the system of representations' (p. 31). Like any other form of representation, interpretation is capable of multiple readings. Staiff then examines the importance and dynamics of aesthetic and visual culture. He argues that popular understandings of the past are strongly shaped by representations that are encountered through film, art, news and other organic or induced sources of information. The interaction of visitors from this standpoint illustrates Staiff's phenomenological perspective on heritage experience.

The following chapter considers the centrality of narrative construction to heritage interpretation. The characteristics of the narrative concept are identified, as are some of the areas of debate that they raise, such as which narrative is told and by whom. 'However, what Staiff only hints at is the impact of (consciously or unconsciously) manipulating narratives in the heritage context, and this is certainly an area worthy of further investigation' (Woodham, 2015). In my opinion, tourism studies would also benefit from the clearer distinction between manipulating and differentiating narratives for different segments of visitors.

One of the most interesting chapters considers innovations in communications technology. Staiff argues that nowadays the majority of visitors to heritage sites arrives with a mobile device connected to the internet. This gives them the opportunity to search for additional information online and take photos or videos. By doing so, visitors are becoming co-creators and sharers of meanings about heritage sites.

Another theoretically sophisticated and tourism-related chapter examines the difficulties of communicating heritage across cultures. The centre of Staiff's argumentation is not only the phrase 'lost in translation' (an expression commonly used to indicate aspects of cross-cultural communication), but also the very idea of what translation is about. One of the deepest theoretical issues of this chapter is the author's questioning the ethics of empowering the cultural position of the target visitor through translation. 'There is probably value in not translating/mediating cultural differences in a number of heritage/visitor circumstances', summarizes the author (p. 154). This issue should be further investigated for the entire field of international tourism.

At the end of the book, the author returns to the heritage encounter, arguing that heritage interpretation frequently fails to engage with experiences such as enchantment and wonderment. Staiff finally argues that it is time for change and calls for 'non-linear and non-determined experiences; for facilitating choice and for being able to deal with the unauthorized, the non-conforming, the unpredicted, the subversive and the playful; for imagination, creativity, and newly performed responses […] for co-authored experiences and meaning-making' (p. 170).

Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation is a lucid, thought-provoking, challenging reconceptualization of heritage interpretation as a cultural phenomenon, which makes a refreshing contribution to the body of literature in the area of heritage interpretation and heritage tourism in general. This book will be of special interest to postgraduate students and academics interested in heritage studies, heritage tourism, and interpretation. Although other reviewers point to its lack of practical value, I think the book will also be valuable to practitioners, especially tourism and heritage interpretation managers, who wish to reflect on their own practice and contribute to innovations in heritage interpretation.

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Pereča vprašanja potrošnje verskega turizma

Zdenko Cerović in Ivana Ivančić

Verski turizem postaja pomemben del splošne turistične fluktuacije. Pričakovano je, da bo ta oblika turizma zaradi razvojnih trendov motivacije turistov le še naraščala. Nasprotno s povečanim tokom turistov v versko usmerjenem turizmu pa je dejstvo, da je potrošnja v tem sektorju zelo nizka. Ob upoštevanju pomembnosti verskega turizma je cilj tega članka poiskati probleme in vprašanja povezane s potrošnjo v versko motiviranem turizmu. Analiza teh problemov in vprašanj lahko prinese možne rešitve in odgovore. Kot primer je uporabljeno mesto Reka, kjer raziščemo versko motivirano potrošnjo v turizmu ter stroške turistov, ki niso primarno povezani z vero; prav tako pa poskušamo najti najšibkejši člen v turistični potrošnji z uporabo statistične analize. Rezultati bodo jasno pokazali, da je turistična potrošnja dokaj nizka, posebej kadar govorimo o stroških versko motiviranih turistov. Te ugotovitve bodo uporabljene za oblikovanje modela za povečanje potrošnje versko motiviranih turistov.

Ključne besede: verski turizem; potrošnja v turizmu; problematike; Reka

Academica Turistica 8(2), 5–14

Trženjski pristop k merjenju kakovosti v prehrambnem gostinstvu – vidik menedžerjev

Marko Kukanja

Članek obravnava kakovost storitev v prehrambnih gostinskih obratih z vidika trženjskih dimenzij kakovosti (7P). Zanimanje raziskovalcev za področje kakovosti v turizmu in gostinstvu se je povečalo po implementaciji modela SERVQUAL leta 1985. Predhodne raziskave so dokazale, da na zagotavljanje kakovosti storitev v gostinstvu vplivajo številni dejavniki. Kljub številnim raziskavam je pomen trženjskih dejavnikov kakovosti v prehrambnem gostinstvu ostal nepreučen. Članek opisuje razvoj trženjskega modela za zagotavljanje kakovosti v prehrambnem gostinstvu. Raziskava se osredotoča na zaznavo menedžerjev gostinskih obratov o kakovosti gostinske ponudbe, saj morebitni razkorak v zaznavi kakovosti med menedžerji in gosti lahko predstavlja osnovno vrzel pri zagotavljanju kakovostne ponudbe. V raziskavo je bilo vključenih 207 menedžerjev različnih vrst prehrambnih obratov v Sloveniji. Rezultati eksplorativne faktorske analize dokazujejo, da so po mnenju menedžerjev za doseganje kakovosti restavracij najpomembnejši dejavniki, ki pripadajo sledečim trženjskim dimenzijam kakovosti – osebju, trženju (trženjsko komuniciranje, tržne poti, cena) in hrani. Ostali trženjski dejavniki kakovosti po mnenju menedžerjev niso statistično pomembni za zagotavljanje kakovosti gostinske ponudbe. Priporočljivo je, da se prihodnje raziskave osredotočijo na ugotavljanje morebitne vrzeli med zaznavo kakovosti menedžerjev in gostov.

Ključne besede: kakovost v prehrambnem gostinstvu; kakovost storitev; menedžment hrane in pijače; trženjski splet; Slovenija

Academica Turistica 8(2), 15–28

Krizno upravljanje v križarskem turizmu: študija primera Dubrovnika

Aleksandar Radić

Namen: Glavni namen raziskave je bil raziskati obstoj kriznega managementa med deležniki znotraj ponudbe križarjenj v Dubrovniku.

Oblika/metode/pristopi: V članku si avtor izbere dve paradigmi – pragmatizem in pozitivizem–, ki jima navadno sledijo kvantitativne tehnike zbiranja podatkov. Strukturirani vprašalnik je avtorju omogočil zbiranje kvantitativnih podatkov, ki so bili obdelani s pomočjo opisne statistike.

Ugotovitve/praktične posledice: Raziskava nam pokaže, da je večina deležnikov v Dubrovniku znotraj ponudbe križarjenj brez razvitega sistema kriznega managementa in nima razvitega vodenja kriznega managementa. Glede na ugotovitve raziskave je po avtorjevem mnenju nujno ponuditi strateške okvire vodenja v kriznem managementu, ki bi jih lahko uporabili manjši in srednji deležniki znotraj ponudbe križarjenj v Dubrovniku,.

Omejitve raziskave: Glavni omejitvi raziskave predstavljata dejstvi, da je bilo intervjuvano samo eno podjetje, ki se ukvarja s križarjenji v Dubrovniku, ter da raziskava ni bila zmožna potrditi prisotnosti kriznega managementa v podjetjih, ki so trdila, da ga imajo.

Originalnost/vrednost: Članek opisuje trenutne trende v kriznem managementu med deležniki znotraj ponudbe križarjenj v Dubrovniku in ponuja strateške okvire vodenja kriznega managementa, ki bi jih lahko uporabili manjši in srednji deležniki znotraj ponudbe križarjenj v Dubrovniku,.

Ključne besede: križarjenja; krizni management; krizno vodenje

Academica Turistica 8(2), 29–44

Pomen indexa konkurenčnosti svetovnega ekonomskega foruma za mednarodne dogodke združenj: primer novih članic Evropske unije

Jan Oršič in Blaž Bregar

Članek se osredotoča na eno najdobičkonosnejših področij turizma – poslovna potovanja, natančneje na dogodke združenj in določene faktorje, ki vplivajo na postopek destinacijskega odločanja. Raziskava temelji na kombinaciji različnih statistik za celovito vzpostavljanje povezav med dogodki združenj in mednarodno konkurenčnostjo trinajstih držav, ki so se včlanile v EU of leta 2004 dalje. Čeprav so si slednje med seboj različene v velikosti, razvitosti in geografskem uvrščanju znotraj Evrope, so rezultati pokazali močno povezavo med državnimi ekonomijami in dogodki združenj.

Ključne besede: dogodki združenj; mednarodna konkurenčnost; organizacije za destinacijski marketing; nova Evropa

Academica Turistica 8(2), 45–54

Percepcija obiskovalcev ponudbe parka Tivoli

Janez Mekinc, Polona Müller in Mariana Rebernik

Namen raziskave je analizirati ponudbo v Parku Tivoli, njegovo kulturno dediščino in naravne danosti. Park Tivoli ima status varovanega omočja, ki ga konceptualno lahko razdelimo na športno-rekreacijski elemente in kulturno-naravne elemente. V raziskavi smo uporabili kvalitativno metodo z strukturiranim intervjujem kot raziskovalnim orodjem. Opravljenih je bilo 120 intervjujev z obiskovalci parka, ki so prebivalci mesta Ljubljane. Ugotovitve raziskave kažejo, da so v parku različne ponudbe in storitve, ki niso del integrirane ponudbe parka. Park nima strategije, s katero bi nagovarjal posamezne ciljne skupine obiskovalcev. Obiskovalci pričakujejo razvoj predvsem v smeri ponudbe kulturnih dogodkov, kot so promenadni koncerti, nastopi manjših vokalnih in glasbenih skupin, umetniške in fotografske delavnice ter rastave. Dogodke in tematske poti je potrebno povezati z novimi trendi urbanistične ureditve parka. Izjemen izziv razvoju parka bo vključitev komunikacijskih tehnologij v trajnostni razvoj parka. Vsi deležniki in interesne skupine, ki sodelujejo s interdisciplinarnim pristopom pri oblikovanju ponudbe parka, bi morali oblikovati celovito ponudbo in načrt upravljanja krajinskega parka.

Ključne besede: turizem; park; trajnostni razvoj; kulturna dediščina; zavarovano območje

Academica Turistica 8(2), 55–67

Sistemsko mišljenje o kompleksnih turističnih sistemih

Tadeja Jere Jakulin

Kompleksnost turističnih sistemov zahteva celostno in pravilno odločanje. Sistemsko mišljenje je postal način razmišljanja v zadnjem stoletju. Predstavlja vidik, ki pristopa k turizmu in njegovim izzivom s točke celote. Preko sistemske metodologije, metod modeliranja in simulacije predstavljamo oris turističnih sistemov kot pomembne veje blaginje, in sicer preko povratnih zank in simulacijskega modela. Osnova simulacijskemu modelu je navadno vzročno-posledični diagram. Simulacija je postala multidisciplinarni pristop k reševanju problemov kompleksnih sistemov. Članek orisuje rezultate simulacije, ki so evalvirani preko sistemov za podporo skupinskemu odločanju in ekspertnih sistemov. Zaključki, ki izhajajo iz razumevanja modela in njegove simulacije, dajejo optimalne rezultate odločevalcem. Na ta način lahko predstavimo principe sistemskega mišljenja kot tiste, ki vodijo k razmišljanju o sodelovanju in soustvarjanju v turizmu in življenju na splošno.

Ključne besede: sistemsko mišljenje; turizem; kompleksni sistemi; MODSIM; modeliranje;

simulacija

Academica Turistica 8(2), 69–73

Analiza inovacijskega potenciala slovenskih kulinaričnih prireditev

Dejan Križaj in Eva Horvat

Izhajajoč iz splošnega pomanjkanja inovacijskih statističnih podatkov in virov na področju turizma se prispevek osredotoča na različne tipe uspešnih mikro turističnih organizacij ter skozi opravljeno študijo primerov analizira inovacijski potencial njihovih kulinaričnih prireditev. Po uvodnem vpogledu v trende na področju kulinarike in raziskovanja inovativnosti članek preučuje štiri prireditvene spletne strani ter njihovo medijsko pokritost s pomočjo kvalitativne vsebinske analize. Izoblikovane so bile tri skupine inovacijskih atributov, ki skupno vsebujejo 23 inovacijskih spremenljivk za opis organizatorjev in njihovih prireditev. V razdelku z rezultati so z omenjenimi spremenljivkami opisani štirje zgoraj omenjeni primeri. V zaključni razpravi so identificirane skupne značilnosti, razlike ter ugotovitve o inovacijskih potencialih manjših kulinaričnih prireditev v Sloveniji in v splošnem.

Ključne besede: inovativnost v turizmu; kulinarične prireditve; nacionalna turistična promocija

Academica Turistica 8(2), 75–84

Kakovost v prehrambnem gostinstvu: mednarodna primerjava med dvema sosednjima severnojadranskima turističnima destinacijama – Portorožem in Opatijo: vidik domačih gostov

Marko Kukanja in Tanja Planinc

Namen raziskave je preučiti podobnosti in razlike v zaznani kakovosti restavracij med domačimi gosti v Opatiji (Hrvaška) in Portorožu (Slovenija). Opatija in Portorož imata dolgo skupno turistično zgodovino. Oba kraja sta bila pomembni turistični letovišči avstro-ogrske monarhije in nekdanje Socialistične federativne republike Jugoslavije. Obe sosednji in konkurenčni turistični destinacije danes pripadata dvema različnima evropskima država – Republiki Sloveniji in Republiki Hrvaški. Na osnovi predhodne raziskave, izvedene v Opatiji (Marković, Raspor & Šegarić, 2010), je bila na osnovi enakega metodološkega pristopa –DINESERV – izvedena raziskava v Piranu. Vzorčna okvira obeh raziskav sta bila sestavljena iz 156 veljavnih vprašalnikov domačih gostov, ki so obedovali v naključno izbranih gostinskih obratih. Rezultati izvedenih faktorskih analiz pričajo o tem, da gostje obeh destinacij zelo podobno (skoraj enako) zaznavajo kakovost gostinskih storitev. Presenetljiva je ugotovitev, da je razkorak med pričakovanji in zaznano kakovostjo storitev v obeh destinacijah negativen. Menedžerji gostinskih obratov morajo zato konstantno meriti kakovost ponudbe in jo prilagajati pričakovanjem svojih gostov. Priporočljivo je, da se izsledki raziskave vključijo v razvojne strategije obeh destinacij.

Ključne besede: prehrambno gostinstvo; kakovost storitev; domači gostje; SERVQUAL; DINESERV; Opatija; Portorož.

Academica Turistica 8(2), 85–96

Evalvacija neodvisnih slovenskih restavracij s pomočjo ocene PageRank

Mitja Petelin in Miha Lesjak

Opravljena študija analizira spletne strani slovenskih restavracij (takšnih, ki niso del kakšne verige ali hotela) z uporabo algoritma »PageRank«. Namen je ugotoviti, ali se lastniki slovenskih neodvisnih restavracij zavedajo pomembnosti optimizacije spletnih strani. Strategija trženja, katere pomemben del je tudi ustrezna in uporabnikom prijazna spletna stran restavracije, lahko pomembno vpliva na stik z uporabniki ter posledično tudi na poslovne rezultate. S pomočjo checkerja »Page Rank« smo prišli do ocen, kako so izbrane spletne strani restavracij prilagojene iskalniku oz. rezultatom iskanja. Restavracije smo izbrali na podlagi vodnika »In Your Pocket City Guide« za mesto Ljubljana ter okolico. Nizke ocene spletnih strani restavracij nakazujejo malo investicij na področju optimizacije spletnih strani za iskalnik.

Ključne besede: evalvacija; spletne strani; slovenske restavracije; PageRank
Academica Turistica 8(2), 97–101

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The main text should contain a coherent and logical structure preferably following the IMRAD format (Introduction, Methods, Research [and] Discussion). However, other structures are also welcome (e.g. Introduction, Development and Conclusions) as long as the text maintains its logical structure and focus. Acknowledgments are optional.

The length of the articles should not exceed 9,000 words (including tables, figures, and references), double spaced, using Times New Roman font sized 12.

Tables. Each table should be submitted on a separate page in a Word document after References. Each table shall have a brief caption; explanatory matter should be in the footnotes below the table. The table shall contain means and the units of variation (sd, se, etc.) and must be free of nonsignificant decimal places. Abbreviations used in the tables must be consistent with those used in the text and figures. Definition symbols should be listed in the order of appearance, determined by reading horizontally across the table and should be identified by standard symbols. All tables should be numbered consecutively (Table 1, Table 2, etc.).

Figures. Captions are required for all Figures and shall appear on a separate manuscript page, beneath table captions. Each figure should be saved as a separate file without captions and named as Figure 1, etc. Files should be submitted in *.ai, *eps, *.tiff or *.jpeg format. Photographs should be saved at at least 300 dpi. Line art images should be saved at 1200 dpi. Lettering (symbols, letters, and numbers) should be between 8 and 9 points, with consistent spacing and alignment. Font face may be Serif (Minion) or Sans Serif (Myriad). Line width should be .5 point or greater. Any extra white or black space surrounding the image should be cropped. Ensure that subject-identifying information (i.e., faces, names, or any other identifying features) is cropped out or opaqued. Prior to publication, the author(s) should obtain all necessary authorizations for the publication of the illustrative matter and submit them to the Editorial Board. All figures should be numbered consecutively (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.). The journal will be printed in black and white.

References

References should be formatted according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2009).

The list of references should only include works that are cited in the text and that have been published or accepted for publication. Personal communications and unpublished works should only be mentioned in the text. References should be complete and contain all the authors (up to six) that have been listed in the title of the original publication. If the author is unknown, start with the title of the work. If you are citing a work that is in print but has not yet been published, state all the data and instead of the publication year write 'in print.'

Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work. Do not use footnotes or endnotes as a substitute for a reference list. Full titles of journals are required (not their abbreviations).

Citing References in Text

One author. Tourism innovation specific ismentioned (Brooks, 2010). Thomas (1992) had concluded . . .

Two authors. This result was later contradicted (Swarbrooke &Horner, 2007). Price and Murphy (2000) pointed out . . .

Three to five authors, first citation. Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) had found . . . It was also discovered (Salamon, Sokolowski, Haddock, & Tice, 2013) . . .

Three to five authors, subsequent citations. Laroche et al. (2009) or (Salamon et al., 2011).

Six or more authors. Wolchik et al. (1999) or (Wolchik et al., 1999).

If two references with six or more authors shorten to the same form, cite the surnames of the first author and of as many of the subsequent authors as necessary to distinguish the two references, followed by a coma and et al.

List several authors for the same thought or idea with separation by using a semicolon: (Kalthof et al., 1999; Biegern & Roberts, 2005).

For detailed instructions please see the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 2009, Chapter 6).

Examples of Reference List

Books

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).Washington, dc: Author.

Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2007). *Consumer behaviour in tourism.* Oxford, England: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Journals

Laroche, M., Bergeron, J., & Barbaro-Forleo, G. (2001). Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 18(6), 503–520.

Wolchik, S. A., West, S. G., Sandler, I. N., Tein, J.–Y., Coatsworth, D., Lengua, L., ... Griffin, W. A. (2000). An experimental evaluation of theory based mother and mother-child programs for children of divorce. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 843–856.

Newspapers

Brooks, A. (2010, 7 July). Building craze threatens to end Lanzarote's biosphere status. *Independent.* Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/building-craze-threatens-to-end-lanzarotes-biosphere-status-2020064.html

Chapters in Books

Poirier, R. A. (2001). A dynamic tourism development model in Tunisia: Policies and prospects. In Y. Aposotolopoulos, P. Loukissas, & L. Leontidou (Eds.), *Mediterranean tourism* (pp. 197–210). London, England: Routledge.

Conference Proceedings

Price, G., & Murphy, P. (2000). The relationship between ecotourism and sustainable development: A critical examination. In M. Ewen (Ed.), *CAUTHE 2000: Peak performance in tourism and hospitality research; Proceedings of the Tenth Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference* (pp. 189–202). Bundoora, Australia: La Trobe University.

Paper Presentation

Thomas, J. (1992, July). *Tourism and the environment: An exploration of the willingness to pay of the average visitor.* Paper presented at the conference Tourism in Europe, Durham, England.

Theses and Dissertations

Sedmak, G. (2006). *Pomen avtentičnosti turističnega proizvoda: primer destinacije Piran* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Working Papers

Salamon, L.M., Sokolowski, S.W., Haddock,M. A., & Tice, H. S. (2013). *The state of global civil society volunteering: Latest findings from the implementation of the UN nonprofitt handbook* (Comparative Nonprofit Sector Working Paper No. 49). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

Web Pages

Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2001). *Census of population, households and dwellings.* Retrieved from http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/Census2001/census.htm

For detailed instructions please see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2009, Chapter 7).

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