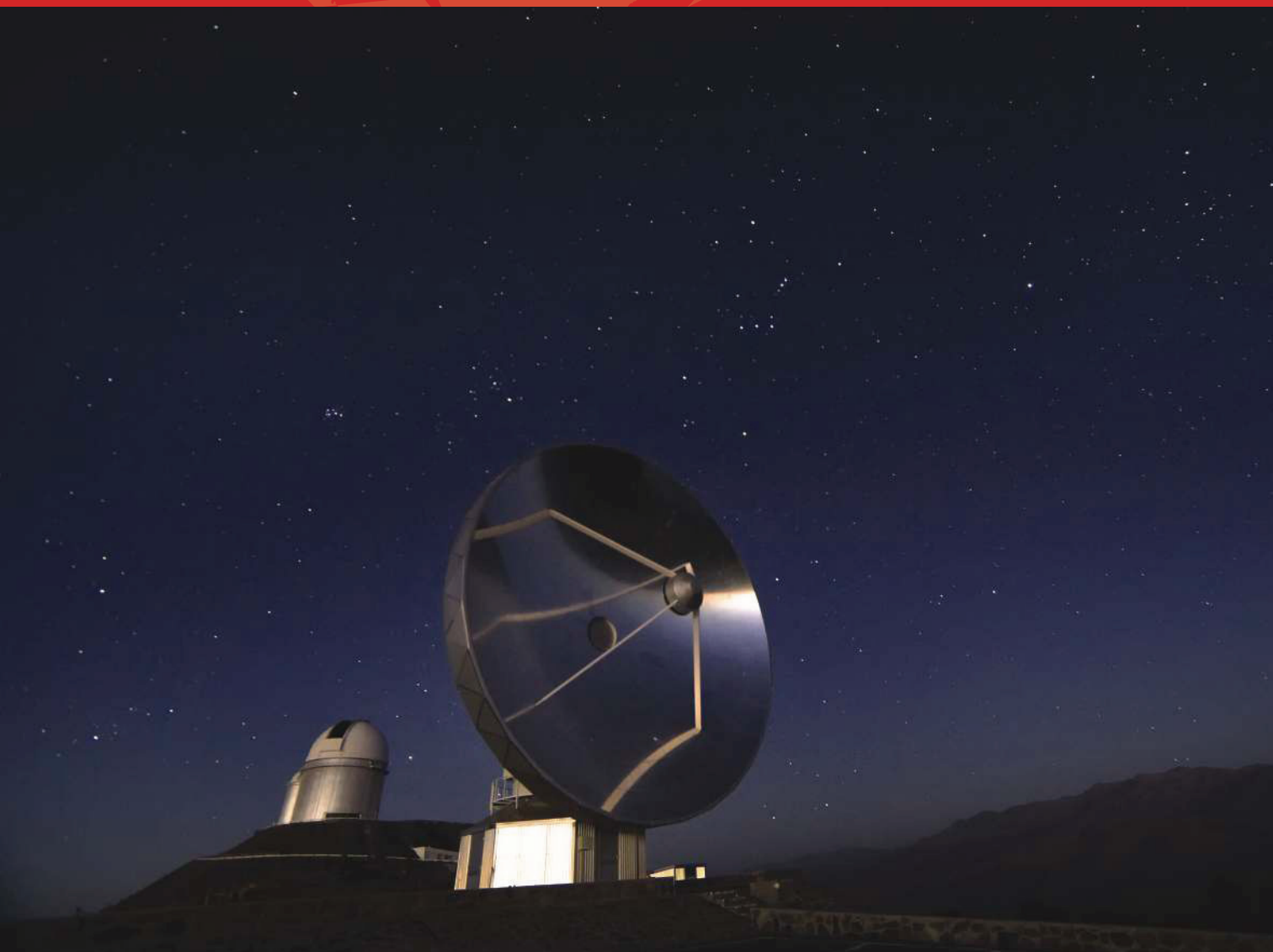




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Experience Marketing As an Accelerator of Customer Satisfaction on the Sport Tourism Market

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Sport events are a driving force of the sport tourism market. The way they are organized as well as their attractiveness have a significant influence on the number of participants, therefore the organizers look for solutions that will ensure the highest attendance possible. The concept of experience marketing is a popular one and perfectly fits the needs arising from the management of sport events. Thanks to this concept the organizers can offer tourists what they seek most: emotions and experience. This article describes how the concept of experience marketing is used by the organizers of international marathon runs. The conducted research made it possible to establish that this concept is widely applied and the marketing tools used are numerous. On the basis of a detailed problem analysis, a model of managing sports events with the application of experience marketing was developed. The model distinguishes three phases of organizing a run: before, during, and after the event.

Keywords: experience marketing, sports tourism, sports events, marathons

Introduction

Regardless of the market development stage, the participants that constitute its supply must constantly compete with each other to meet the increasing needs of customers. The sport tourism market, analysed in this article, is currently going through the phase of dynamic development. For several decades, it has been the source of significant revenue for many countries, both developed and developing ones.

Sport events with thousands, even tens of thousands of participants are an important part of the sport tourism market. Marathon runs, which this article focuses on, is one example of such events. The participants of marathon runs and the people who accompany them, who come from places far from the run venue, are active or passive sports tourists and, as customers, have specific needs and expectations (Wicker, Hallmann, & James, 2012, pp. 165–182). Buyer satisfaction and pleasure is the key to success for the sports

event organizers on the sports tourism market as well as on any other market. One of the concepts that can contribute to the increase of satisfaction is experience marketing, which has been developing for about two decades (Palmer, 2010, pp. 196–208; Schmitt, 2010, pp. 62–64). As its underlying assumption is to provide experience, trigger positive emotions and impressions, it seems to be a perfect competitive tool on the sports event market. Especially given that sport events, seen as a marketing product, are co-produced by their participants: the sportspeople and the supporters. As prosumers, they have a significant influence on the event attractiveness and its ability to fulfil the observed needs.

The aim of this article is to diagnose the potential and the possibilities of the concept of experience marketing on the sports tourism market and to identify the actions undertaken by the organizers of marathon runs as a part of implementing the aforementioned

concept. To realize the set goals, a detailed literature study was conducted. The results of the author of this paper's own research and available data on the sports market were also used.

Experience Marketing

The concept of experience marketing (other names used in the literature: experience economy, customer experience management) assumes that building relations between an enterprise and its customers based on emotions triggered by experiences that are important to them, acquired in the process of collaboration and consumption (Sundbo & Sorensen, 2013, p. 12; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The creation of the experience-based economy was a result of changes and trends. The following are among the most important ones:

1. Developing consumerism, resulting in increasing customer demand concerning the form of the purchased products and the places where the products are offered, purchased and consumed;
2. Increasing, but also the levelling-off quality of the offered products and services (commoditization), resulting in the customers being unable to see the difference between these products. The enterprises lose their possibilities to create competitive advantage based solely on technology, product range, or image;
3. The increase in the demand of the customer looking for new values in spiritual or emotional spheres, not explored or insufficiently penetrated by enterprises thus far;
4. Mutual marketing communication becomes more common, which allows customers to state their expectations and desires directly, and the enterprises to personalize their messages;
5. Developing the need for rapid communication, most importantly through social media, and for sharing information (in extreme cases turning into customer exhibitionism).

A detailed analysis of the problem of building relations in the emotional sphere leads to the conclusion that the possibilities and scope of the experience marketing concept applications are not uniform, and the concept efficiency depends on many factors, e.g. on

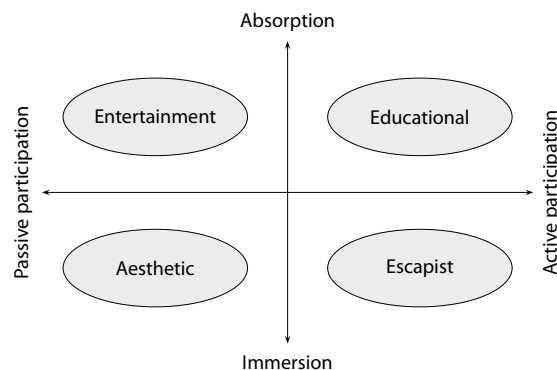


Figure 1 Types of Experiences (adapted from Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

the possibility of including the buyers in the process, among others.

The literature shows different divisions of customer experience. Pine and Gilmore presented an interesting division, taking into account the level of absorption or immersion and active or passive participation; they named four types of experience (Figure 1).

Experience marketing efficiency increases when customers reach a high level of immersion, and when they need to participate actively. This situation can be encountered in the sport or sport tourism markets, among others. With lower involvement and a passive approach, the strength and time of the experience are significantly lower.

The change of customer market behaviour, the constant search for something new, something more involving, absorbing, emotional and, additionally, for technological development, accessibility and that possibilities of so-called new media are the factors that make experience marketing noticeable and used by various enterprises regardless of the industry and products offered (Hoyle, 2002, pp. 171–174). However, as previous observations show, the greatest chances of succeeding in implementing the aforementioned concept are attributed to the projects in which both the suppliers and customers are directly involved in the creation and exchange processes, and the product consumption takes place in the open and is highly emotional (Mallen & Adams, 2013, pp. 3–6). Such conditions are created by the sports event market, which is a part of a widely-defined leisure time industry.

Sport Tourism Market

The tourism industry has visibly diversified in the last two decades, turning into a structure of many specifically profiled forms of leisure. One of the most dynamically developing types of tourism is sport tourism, which generates a significant share of this branch income. It is estimated that the total turnover from sport tourism in the USA alone amounts to almost 30 billion dollars each year (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell, & Shonk, 2014, p. 9). According to Pitts (1999, pp. 31–50), a sports marketing specialist, two types of sports tourists and, related to them, types of tourism: active sports tourism and passive sports tourism, play a key role in the development of the global sports market. In contrast, Derry, Jago, and Fredline (2004) believe that what drives the sports tourism industry are more and more frequently organized mass sports events, especially those in which visitors can participate actively. This criterion is met by, among others, marathon runs. The biggest ones attract tens of thousands of participants. Moreover, according to various research, one person participating in a marathon run is accompanied by, on average, one or two people who support the runner. Gammon and Robinson call those who participate in marathon runs 'strong marathon tourists,' while those who accompany them 'soft marathon tourists' (Gammon & Robinson, 1997, pp. 1–6). According to Miller and Kelli (2008), each year, more than eight million runners around the world finish a marathon run.

Even though sports tourism is developing dynamically, the sports event organizers continuously look for new concepts and marketing solutions to fulfil the growing expectations of their customers (Police Executive Research Forum, 2011). One of the relatively new solutions, which positively surprises the sport tourists, is the concept of experience marketing. Nowadays providing the customers with emotions, regardless of the industry, becomes a strategic success factor. Modern customers less and less frequently ask themselves: 'What do I want?' and 'What don't I already have?' But more frequently they ask: 'What do I want to experience?' and 'What haven't I already experienced?'

The concept of experience marketing assumes building the relationship between an organization and its

customers on the basis of emotions induced by experience significant to the customers, emotions connected with the process of collaboration and consumption. The sport event market as well as the sports tourism industry related to it, are perfect to be used in competition because the sport event participants are an integral part of these events, they help create the atmosphere (they are prosumers) and have a direct influence on the event value in the opinion of customers (Greenwell et al., 2014, pp. 115–116). Therefore, even though the global sports tourism market is developing, the concept of experience marketing can be an accelerator of customer satisfaction.

Research Problem and Methodology

Sport events for amateurs, seen as a marketing product, should be organized mainly with runners' needs in mind (Hoyle, 2002, pp. 18–19). Numerous studies on this problem have already been conducted, and their results allow for a rather detailed diagnosis of recreational runners' expectations. However, similarly to other industries, running event organizers, while competing, need to constantly look for new solutions in order to surprise their customers in a positive way, attract their attention and gain acceptance. One of the marketing activities with a strategic meaning for the competitive success of these entities can be the implementation of the concept of experience marketing. The correct implementation of the strategy of developing a running event can not only attract runner's attention; they are the organizer's potential customers, and they can be encouraged to participate, but it can also turn them into so-called advocates (supporters) of the brand who will recommend the run to other runners. Therefore, marketing activities of the marathon run organizers related to the concept of experience marketing and the behaviours of marathon runners connected to their participation in a specific run became a research problem for the author of this article. The study is to:

- identify the activities based on the concept of experience marketing, used by the organizers of international marathon runs,
- identify the runners' motives for participating in

marathon runs organized away from their place of living.

Before the research commenced, three hypotheses were stated:

- H1 *The concept of experience marketing is a widely used method of encouraging the runners to participate in a marathon.*
- H2 *Emotional factors rather than rational factors influence the marathon run attractiveness.*
- H3 *The hedonistic approach of the runners' determines their decision to choose a marathon run in which to participate.*

The research methodology was adjusted to verify the aforementioned hypotheses and to realize the set goals. The following research methods were used:

1. *Participating observation.* Research conducted in 2010–2016 in 8 European countries that annually host marathons of recognized reputation on the sport market (Germany, France, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Poland). The scope of observation was the marketing activities of organizers of nine biggest marathons or one of the biggest marathon runs in the aforementioned countries.
2. *Questionnaire.* The research conducted in 2014 in Poland with the use of the CAWI method; conducted among marathon runners (1,993 randomly chosen respondents).
3. *Individual Deepened Interviews.* Research conducted in 2015 among 12 Polish marathon runners that regularly participate in foreign marathon runs.
4. *Analysis of information from secondary sources,* mainly reports and statistics published by marathon organizers after each run, information and messages published on marathon websites, reports with research results concerning the running market in the USA, Great Britain, and Poland.

The methods used and the timespan of research made triangulation possible, therefore increasing the credibility of the results.

Activities of Running Event Organizers Based on the Experience Marketing Concept

In the course of the nine participant observations, several marketing activities, which result from the analysed concept of this article, were identified. Marathon organizers compete with each other and attempt to win marathoners' approval. They use different marketing tools, most of them are to capture runners' imagination and to be a promise of a fascinating adventure that could encourage someone to participate in the advertised event.

One of the key elements of building the competitive advantage of a marathon is the sports arena that is the venue for the run. In the case of marathons, the course of the run plays the role of the arena, right from the start to the finish line. The organizers do their best to organize the course so that the runners go through beautiful tourist attractions of the city hosting the run. The majority of runners sees the run as a way of sight-seeing, so the more interesting historical places and buildings can be seen on the course, the better for the event it is.

Of the marathons observed, the most beautiful courses were found in the runs with the highest numbers of participants: London, Paris, and Berlin. Fewer tourist attractions along the course can be found in cities, such as Kosice, Prague, Frankfurt, and Poznan, which translates into a lower number of runners participating. The start and finish lines are the most important parts of the marathon courses. Not only should they have a suitable capacity for letting people through, but also be of emotional meaning both to the runners and the supporters. Some examples of well-selected start/finish lines are the following: Old Market Square (Prague), Olympic Stadium (Amsterdam), Champs-Élysées and the Triumphal Arc (Paris), and Brandenburg Gate (Berlin). These choices are not random; each of these places is distinctly beautiful, has its own history and is easily memorable to the tourists that visit it, not only the sports ones.

A complementary tool that influences the runners and supporters emotionally, used by the marathon organizers, is music played during the event. Music is played before the start, during the finish, but also on the course. The runners are informed about it long be-

fore the event. Music is both a form of support, and it makes the event more attractive and helps create a cheerful atmosphere among its participants.

To increase the prestige of their events, the organizers of international marathons tend to invite professional runners, the so-called elite, to participate in their runs. The declaration of participation made my recognized famous marathoners encourages other amateurs to participate in the same run so that they can directly compete with their idols, whom they know only from TV. To run together with such celebrities such as Mo Farah, Heile Gebrselassie, or Kenenisa Bekele is an extraordinary experience for thousands of amateurs.

Photos of the runners taken by the authorized photographers on the course are a standard element of a tourist product like a marathon run. A few days after the event, under their marathon number, each marathoner can find their photos on the event website and purchase them. In recent years, organizers have also started to offer short video recordings, in which the participant can see themselves running.

Various forms of final results presentation are yet another tool used by experience marketing and applied during marathon runs. Not only do they develop very dynamically but they are also a tool to compete successfully. Examples of this include finishing time, 5 km lap times, average running speed on different distances, the number of other runners overtaken on different distances, the runner's position compared to the elite runners, etc.

Further encouragement attracting the runners are the supporting events such as sport equipment, healthy food and medical product fairs; lectures given by experts; meetings with famous athletes; music concerts; other sport presentations, gadgets designed for the current run; games and contests for the supporters.

The observations over the years and the research findings were to be verified during the Individual Deepened Interviews conducted with twelve experienced marathoners. All interviewed runners agreed that the concept of experience marketing is widely implemented by the marathon organizers, especially the international ones. According to those interviewed, capturing imagination is the main way of attracting

runners to a sports event. Providing emotions during the event means fulfilling the promises made, and souvenirs such as medals, special t-shirts, certificates, and photos are a way of making the event memorable. According to the interviewed marathoners, the organizers continually improve the marketing tools they use: for example, the presentation of the results and videos from the course. Moreover, they also attempt to introduce innovations such as holding a lottery with expensive prizes (cars, a starting package for prestigious marathons), organizing competitions for the supporters, additional runs or virtual participation in the marathon (Prague).

It should be noted that most of the identified and presented above tools of experience marketing are used by the organizers of all observed marathon events. Each of the activities is done in a slightly different way and in a different place; therefore, they are all distinctive, which makes them exceptional. The use of several experience marketing tools makes it possible to create a unique formula of each running event. It is up to the runners to decide which offer meets their expectations, which one causes more emotions and provides more experience.

Motives to Participate in and Recommend Marathon Run

The questionnaire survey conducted in 2014 on a group of nearly two thousand marathoners from Poland was to determine the importance of emotions and experience as a factor in purchase decisions taken by sports tourists.

Table 1 presents the structure of responses to the question about motives that drive Polish marathoners to decide to participate in a 42.195 km run. It can be seen that three motives are more frequent than others: the will to check one's capabilities, the distance from the place of living, and the atmosphere promised by the organizer. The last motive should be mainly considered by the organizers attempting to implement experience marketing tools. For the majority of the respondents the most important factors that determine the marathon they choose to participate in, is the unforgettable experience connected with the place, the expected emotional impressions before, during and af-

Table 1 Motives to Participate in a Marathon Run

Reason	%
Will to check one's capabilities	60.0
Distance from the place of living	55.8
'Magic of a marathon'	47.7
Encouraging promotion of the run	17.6
Large number of participants	17.1
Friends' suggestions	16.2
Low participation fee	14.6
Other	10.6

Notes The respondents could choose more than one answer

Table 2 Reasons to Recommend a Marathon to Other Runners

Reason	%
Event's atmosphere	78.8
Organization's efficiency	74.2
Support on the course	54.2
Large number of participants	42.5
Starter pack	26.5
Fast and flat course	23.1
Supporting events and attractions	23.0
Facility	14.3
Other	3.6

Notes The respondents could choose more than one answer

ter the run, being a part of a community of thousands of the people who share the same interests and passions and the recommendations of other runners.

An even greater importance of tools and activities resulting from experience marketing was observed in the question about the reasons to recommend a marathon to other runners. As Table 2 presents, the most important reasons to recommend a sports event are those connected with the emotions of the runners.

The atmosphere of a sports event is the most often frequently argument that results in the event receiving a high grade and in recommending it to other people. Half the respondents said that support on the course was necessary, both the one organized offi-

cially (e.g. music bands, dancing cheerleaders, organized school groups) and the spontaneous one, by the citizens standing along the course and encouraging the runners to compete. Almost one in four runners would recommend an event because of various accompanying events and attractions. There are, for example, sport equipment fairs, music concerts, and photo exhibitions. The aforementioned examples testify to the crucial role of runners' emotions and how they perceive the event and whether they would recommend it. It is noteworthy that many respondents mentioned the functionality of marathon organization. Arriving at an unknown city and participating in a run means dealing with a few minor obstacles, such as finding the run's office, picking up the start number and the starting package, going to the orientation dinner (pasta party), and on the marathon's day: leaving some of the sportswear in the cloakroom, finding the correct zone at the starting line, collecting the sportswear after the run and the like. The efficient organization and lack of problems are not connected with any particular positive emotions; however, organizational chaos, lack of information and the like can cause very strong negative emotions, thus lowering the eagerness to recommend the event.

The research findings confirm the substantial importance of the experience marketing concept on the sports tourism market. Marathon runs organizers who try to gain new customers, marathoners, should use the tools that influence the emotions to convince them to participate in the event and, subsequently, to have them recommend it to the other runners.

Experience Marketing Model on Marathon Market

It is extremely difficult to gain an advantage in the highly competitive sports tourism market. The marathon runs market is also a demanding market, even though it is still developing, which can be proven by the increasing number of participants in the majority of marathons all over the world. The run organizers constantly need to look for new solutions that will not only be accepted by the runners but will also amaze and surprise them with something unexpected, and make unforgettable impressions. Experience marketing meets the demand of the organizers as the con-

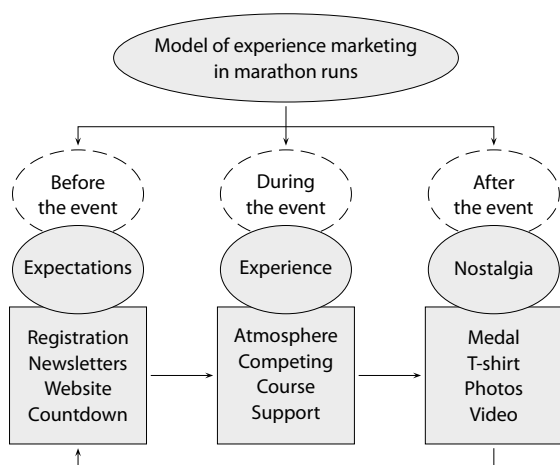


Figure 2 Experience Marketing on Marathon Runs Market

cept assumptions fit in well with the specifics of the marathon run market. That is why the concept might be used with better efficiency than on other markets.

The research was conducted for several years and the deepened analysis of information from secondary sources leads to the conclusion that experience marketing is widely applied by the running event organizers, although with various results. The thorough analysis of empirical data leads to the development of a model that suggests the possible uses of experience marketing on the sports event market (Figure 2). Marketing support of the marathon run organization process can be divided into three phases: before, during, and after the event. In each of these phases, the organizer should focus on different activities, briefly described further in the article.

The marathon run organizers should use the concept of experience marketing many months before the event, when their activities focus mainly on promotion. It is already possible to develop the feeling of expectation and tension before the run. To achieve this, the following tools can be used: the course visualization, the medals presentation, countdown, periodic newsletters, etc. The main task of experience marketing in the first phase should be developing the runners expectations for the marathon. The expectations resulting from marketing activities of the organizer, the brand created in the sports environment and

other runners' recommendations are the most important factors that influence the choice of a marathon run.

In the second phase, experience marketing is applied during the sports event. Generally speaking, the activities are to provide the emotions that were previously promised. The runners come to the event to experience fascinating moments related not only to the run itself but also to additional events, meeting new runners or experiencing something completely new to them. It is worth mentioning that the sport event atmosphere is created mainly by its participants, their number, behaviour and shared emotions. The marathoners and the people who accompany them are the prosumers, who, together with the organizers, have considerable influence on the quality and attractiveness of the sports event (Mallen & Adams, 2008, pp. 170–172).

The last yet equally important phase of the suggested experience marketing model consists of creating nostalgia connected with the event. The organizers should make sure that the runners, going back home, have plenty of new exciting experiences that will positively influence their opinions of the event and will encourage recommending it to the other runners, perhaps even returning and participating in another run. To increase the efficiency of marketing activities in the last phase of the model, the runners receive gadgets with the run's logo, and specially designed medals with their finishing time; they can also purchase photos of themselves running taken by a photographer, etc. Marketing activities undertaken in the last phase of the suggested model are to strengthen the memory of the experience during the run. Therefore, the emotional bond between the runners and the run will last for much longer than just those few days of their stay at the event venue.

Further Research

The research that was conducted does not exhaust the problem of applying the concept of experience marketing on the sports tourism market. The research made it possible to discover many interesting marketing activities undertaken by the run organizers and purchasing behaviours of sports tourists, the mara-

thoners coming from other cities; however, it did not explain all the determinants and reasons for acting.

One of the areas that need scientific exploration is the use of information technologies in the process of building emotions for the marathon run participants. The availability of mobile devices that have become the most important source of information to many tourists suggests a wider use of such marketing communication that should be included in the strategy of sports event organizers. Another problem for further research is the segmentation of runners based on other not-yet-used criteria and offering various packages of benefits to the selected groups. Different groups of runners might seek different benefits. The correct segmentation might help the run organizers better prepare their offer adapted to the various needs of identified homogenous segments of buyers. The example of the new classification of marathoners can be separating a new group apart from the so-called elite: professional runners with slightly lower skills, but still representing the above average level, which are the so-called semi-elite. The marathoners who participated in the research say that the runners with higher capabilities are driven by different motives and have different goals than those who run for fun only. Another subject that requires further research is the problem of building the runners' loyalty, perceived as repeated participation in the subsequent marathon runs. Sports tourism as a leisure activity is inherently connected with sightseeing in new places and, in the case of the marathon runs, participating in various sports events. This is slightly against the general intention of the marathon organizer who would like their buyers (runners) to be loyal and repeat their participation in the other runs. To date, little is known about the runners' motives that influence their decisions to participate in the same marathon more than once. One can guess that these motives are connected with emotions and experience of the past runs. If identified, these motives could help profile the marketing activities to be more effective and aim at building the loyalty of runners.

Conclusion

The runners coming from places far away from the marathon venue fulfil their active leisure needs. That

is why they constitute part of the tourism market demand, more precisely: sports tourism market. Trying to meet their own expectations and fulfil their sports dreams, their choice of the sports event is mainly based on emotional criteria. Experience is the most important determinant that influences the decision whether to participate in a marathon or not. It motivates them to participate and significantly influences different opinions about various analysed events (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008, p. 94).

Therefore, the concept of experience marketing perfectly fits the needs of the marathon run organizers who, due to the strong competitiveness on the sport market, constantly need to appeal to the participants. The conducted research shows that the effectiveness of the marketing activities of the marathon run organizers depends mainly on:

1. appropriate choice of a course that will give the runners plenty of aesthetic experience, focusing mainly on the starting and finishing lines,
2. providing a number of attractions and supporting events that will be value added to the basic product (the marathon run itself),
3. skilful tension building and expectations with a teasing method: revealing the subsequent facts related to the run, thus capturing runners' imagination,
4. creating a unique, exceptional atmosphere with the help of runners and their supporters, who play the role of the prosumers; they participate in the process of event creation,
5. offering the runners tangible gadgets and souvenirs that will stimulate their memories of the run long after it is completed.

All the factors above can be found in the concept of experience marketing, the use of which might act as an accelerator that will increase the positive experience of the runners: it will provide exactly the thing they expect most from participating in a marathon run. The research shows that the concept of experience marketing is widely applied to the sports event market. However, many organisers find it challenging as its successful implementation is not easy. Although they are doing their best, the run organizers all over the world

are still unable to meet the number of prospect participants, which testifies the challenge that experience marketing poses.

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Safety and Security in Space Tourism

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The purpose of the study is to shed further light on the understanding of safety as one of the most important aspects of space tourism. From the safety perspective, the development of spaceflight tourism is hoped to contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of safety factors in commercial space travel, and thus, to the more sustainable development of this new tourism industry. Therefore, it is important to discuss, even at this embryonic stage of space tourism, that planning and implementation of future tourist flights into space must consider all possible safety factors and minimize risks. We see limitations in the fact that space tourism is a new phenomenon and a new research field, which is now fostering the theoretical and methodological foundations of its development. As a result, research into space tourism and the safety of commercial space flight is limited. A typology of space tourists is practically non-existent; therefore, any comparison of space tourism safety with other types of tourism is inadequate. This study focuses on the analysis of new safety strategies for space tourism; the experiences and knowledge obtained from previous forms of adventure and extreme tourism have been considered.

Keywords: space tourism, security, safety, space flight, risk

Introduction

The tourism industry is now one of the largest and fastest growing economic activities in the world. It is essential for economic growth and development: employing people, improving the standard of the world's population and playing an important role in alleviating poverty in developing countries. More and more people can afford the opportunity to travel and are also exploiting the possibilities to do so. Until recently, it has been difficult for existing transport to access out of the way destinations in less than one day (Kurež, 2011). In 2015, the number of tourist arrivals increased by 4.6%, reaching a record number of 1.186 billion. Despite the global financial crisis, international travel

results were above expectations, with an additional 52 million international passengers in 2015. Forecasts prepared by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014) in January 2016 point to a continuation of growth in international tourist arrivals at a rate of between 3.5% and 4.5% in 2016. The largest growth in tourism for 2015 was recorded in Asia and the Pacific (+6%) and Europe (+5%). By subregion, the best results were recorded by South East Asia (+8%), Oceania, the Caribbean, Central America and Northern Europe (all +7%), followed by North America and South America (both +6%). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2016) data, the direct economic impact of tourism in 2015 contributed to global

GDP to the value of 2.2 billion dollars (3%). However, when we calculate the direct, indirect, and induced impact of tourism, it comes to 7.1 trillion or 9.8% of global GDP. With regards to employment, the importance of tourism is even more pronounced. In 2015 the tourism industry employed 107 million people, which is five times more than in the automotive industry. Taking into account the indirect and induced employment in the tourism sector, we find that 283 million jobs were provided in 2015, accounting for 1 in 11 jobs in the world (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2016).

The basic condition for the development of tourism is safety and protection. However, it is only in the last two or three decades that the issue of safety has gained greater importance. During times of terrorist acts, local wars, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, levels of safety significantly fell. The importance of security in tourism began to increase in the 1950s (Table 1), with the development of mass tourism. During this period, tourism was no longer the privilege of a narrow social order or class, but tourist flows gradually incorporated the middle and lower classes. Tourism started to develop in more and more countries and regions of the world. Faster development of transport in the automotive and aerospace industries contributed to greater passenger mobility (Kovari & Zimany, 2011). The globalization of tourism began in the 1990s, causing vulnerability and susceptibility to security threats (Kurež, 2011). Such security issues as we encounter today, have all arisen since the emergence of modern tourism, but their impact is markedly greater since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001 (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006).

Decisions about a tourists' journey strongly depend on their feelings of well-being, the sense of insecurity and the presence of risk (Ambrož & Mavrič, 2004). The security component in tourism must, therefore, be addressed in order to ensure safety at all levels of the tourism service (Ivanuša, Lesjak, Roša, & Podbregar, 2012). Respondents to Ambrož's (2003) study on motivations for tourist travel under the influence of a culture of fear, expressed the opinion that the tourist is also obliged to care for their safety and to comply with safety rules. However, security issues in tourism are

complex, and thus also need to be addressed. There is particular sensitivity to the relationship between security and human rights and security and freedom, pleasure, discretion, and integrity. Stricter safety measures may also lead to the limitation and weakening of human rights. In tourism, this is reflected in degraded or limited tourist activities (Mekinc, 2010). Suitable information for users of tourist services is also among the important factors in tourism safety. The process for informing tourists includes obtaining, analysing, and communicating relevant information to them.

Defining the Concept of Space Tourism

The wish to visit space was recognized thousands of years ago, and cannot be spatially or temporally defined. It was first realized by Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, on 12 April 1961, when the Vostok 1 space flight stayed in orbit for 108 minutes. Since then, spaceflights have been exclusively reserved for scientists and professional astronauts or cosmonauts. Over the past 35 years, many organizations have attempted to realize and establish space tourism, but high costs and political concerns have prevented commercial forms of spaceflight (Klemm & Markkanen, 2011). It was not until April 2001, forty years after Yuri Gagarin's space flight, that Dennis Tito became the first space tourist. Today, space tourism is becoming a reality, although it remains in the pioneering stage. As predicted by Ciccarelli and DeMicco (2008), in the 21st century, space tourism will possibly become the greatest development in the tourism industry. This industry, which is constantly looking for new products and destinations, may become the biggest promoter of space tourism. Certainly, there is the prospect of space tourism becoming what air flights are today (Goehlich, 2007).

Space tourism is a new, incomplete and untested market niche. Thus, tourism operators, as well as tourists, are becoming familiar with it. Something that was, until recently, a utopian, futuristic, science fiction concept is becoming a more realistic possibility. Undoubtedly, this will become a tourism industry, as with previous others, essentially relying on the traveller and their requirements and need for safety. Therefore, it is important to discuss, even at this embryonic stage of

Table 1 The Changing Concept of Safety and Security in the Tourism (1950–2010)

Period	Main characteristic	Features, attributes
Mass tourism (1), 1950–1970	Safety and security in tourism as one of the problems in tourism. Simplified approach to the perception of safety and security issues in tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism security is a one- or two-dimensional notion. • Only a few elements of security issues are in focus (public safety, health safety, road safety, etc.). • Within the elements of safety and security, only a small number of factors were given importance (e.g. health and hygiene problems: 1. drinkable water, 2. necessity of vaccination, 3. cleanliness of toilets). • Security problems are localized in time and space. • Security problems may affect the image of a city or country but not the image of a whole region. • Travel-related risks and problems are not raised on the international level of tourism industry (excluding international transport regulations). • Solving problems of security depends mainly on the regulations of the national authorities.
Mass tourism (2), 1970–1990	Period of enlargement of security concept of tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional risk factors appear in travel and tourism (airplane hijacking, terrorist actions as a tool of social struggle). • Threats to security reach regional level in some parts of the world (Middle East, Basque country, etc.). • Beginning of a wider international cooperation related to security issues. • Technical improvements in safety, e.g. air transport). • WTO draws attention to safety, security of tourists (World Tourism Organization, 1989). • Compact but specific (that is to say not general) solutions are created (e.g. the case of Israel's El Al airlines).
Transition to Global Tourism 1990–	Period of complex perception of security and safety in tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous new elements appear within the tourism security issues due to the omnipotent factors of globalization meaning that national/regional economies, societies, and cultures become integrated through a worldwide network of communication (internet!), mobility (tourism!), trade of goods and services (personal data security, environmental security, natural disasters, pandemics, etc.). • Security of travel has become a global problem that we cannot disregard. • Number of destinations, situation, and tourists affected by the lack of security is increasing. • Lack of security causes regional stagnation or decrease in tourist flows and even on global level (9/11). • Basic changes in security concept in travel and tourism, understanding the necessity of common actions.

Notes Adapted from Kovari & Zimanyi (2011).

space tourism, that planning and implementation of future tourist flights into space must consider all possible safety factors and minimize risks. Rather than focusing only on passenger safety in tourist space flights, this should include safety personnel on the ground, also during the testing of vessels, as well as during all phases of flight, public safety during vessel take-off and landing, managing space traffic, as well as the

prevention of pollution in orbit. One important aspect of safety is the availability of appropriate and relevant information for the public and future space tourists. The link between safety and tourism has been present since the emergence of modern tourism and the travel industry, as safety is an indispensable component of modern tourist attractions, their quality, and development. Given its nature, complexity, cost

Table 2 The Changing Concept of Safety and Security in the Tourism (1950–2010)

Stage	Description	og duration	Flight duration	Price	Realized
1	Natural attractions and others	none	none	\$0–\$2000	yes
2	Terrestrial tour	none	none	\$20–\$8500	yes
3	Parabolic flight	0,5 min.	few hours	\$4000	yes
4	High-altitude flight (jet airplane)	none	few hours	\$32,000	yes
5	High-altitude flight (balloon)	none	few hours	\$75,000–110,000	no
6	Point to point flight	few min.	1–2 hours	not known yet	no
7	Suborbital flight	5 min.	2,5–3 hours	\$250,000*	no
8	Orbital flight	1 day	1 day	\$300,000*	no
9	Orbital flight plus stay (ISS*)	10 days	10 days	\$20 M	yes
10	Moon flight	weeks	weeks	\$100 M*	no
11	Mars flight	months	months	billions*	no
12	Titan flight and beyond	years	years	billions*	no

Notes * International Space Station. Adapted from Goehlich (2007, p. 217), Peeters (2010, p. 1630), D’Orazio (2013), and Emanuelli (2013).

and risk, space flight is related in many ways to more extreme forms of adventure tourism. The preparations are time-consuming and stressful, the conditions during take-off, while in space and during landing are still relatively dangerous. Therefore, in the first place, especially in preparing new safety strategies for space tourism, the experiences and knowledge obtained from previous forms of adventure and extreme tourism must be considered.

Scientific studies emphasize space tourism as commercial flights for tourists into space, either as shorter suborbital or longer orbital spaceflight. Klemm and Markkanen (2011) point out that due to the small number of passengers and the exclusivity of spaceflight, this still cannot be called tourism. Instead of space tourism, the terms ‘public space travel’ or ‘private flight in space’ could be used. European Space Agency (2008) defines space tourism ‘to mean suborbital flights by privately funded and/or privately operated vehicles and the associated technology development driven by the space tourism market.’ Table 2 presents the field of space tourism considering the duration of weightlessness, flight time, cost, and possible realization.

In terms of space tourism safety, attention is mostly given to suborbital and orbital flight tourism, which have already been executed or will be executed in the

near future, and which, therefore, are most relevant. Although technology is already partially available for several other forms of space tourism (staying in an orbital hotel, flights to the moon, moon landing); for most other forms (flights to Mars, Mars landing, flights to Titan), it has yet to be developed (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010). The start of commercial flights to these celestial bodies is predicted within a few decades.

The aerospace industry is currently dominated by several national space agencies, such as the American National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), European Space Agency (ESA) and Russian Federal Space Agency (RKA). Even the Chinese Space Agency (CNSA) is becoming an increasingly important participant for space launches (Morley, 2006). Increasingly, private companies are also starting to develop commercial spaceflight, either in cooperation with national space agencies or by developing separate independent projects. A breakthrough private spaceflight took place in October 2012, with the privately held company SpaceX, which has a contract with NASA, successfully launching the Falcon 9/Dragon cargo spacecraft to the International Space Station. A similar agreement by NASA was concluded with Planet Space and SpaceDev. It can be assumed that space tourism services will draw on services from these pioneering organizations (Giacalone, 2013).

Orbital flight is when a spacecraft flies high above the atmosphere and enters the Earth's orbit (orbiting or circling). The altitude of Earth's orbit is somewhere between 160 and 2,000 kilometres. At this altitude, spacecraft can orbit the Earth for an extended period, from two weeks (e.g., the former Space Shuttle), up to several months or years (e.g., the International Space Station) (Anderson, 2005).

In the spring of 2001, Dennis Tito became the first space tourist, spending over a week on the International Space Station, paying \$20 million to the Russian Space Agency for that flight. Since Tito's orbital flight, there have been six more space tourists: In 2002, Mark Shuttleworth (South Africa) in 2005, Gregory Olsen (USA), 2006 Anousheh Ansari (USA/Iran) in 2007 and 2009, Charles Simonyi (USA), 2008 Richard Garriott (USA) and Guy Laliberté (Canada) in 2009. These seven participants are currently the only ones who can be characterized as genuine space tourists. Thus far, only the Virginia-based travel agency Space Adventure, in cooperation with the Russian Space Agency, is offering the possibility for tourist trips into orbit (Giacalone, 2013).

Orbital space tourism as a commercial activity remains at an embryonic stage, but in the coming decades, it will not consist of only one or two trips per year, costing \$20 million. Revenue from ticket sales alone may reach up to 10 billion dollars annually. High revenues can also create additional services, such as providing food for space tourists, entertainment, and sports in space, designing and selling space garments, etc. (Goehlich, 2007). One important contribution of space tourism will be the construction of future commercial, residential space stations (space hotels) in orbit (Martinez, 2007; 2009). The most advanced company in space hotel planning is currently Bigelow Aerospace. The founder, Robert Bigelow, is also the owner of the Budget Suites of America hotel chain. Bigelow Aerospace has two experimental orbiting habitats, the small-scale Genesis I and Genesis II (Pizam, 2008). In April 2016, the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (BEAM) arrived at the ISS: the temporary, experimental module developed by Bigelow Aerospace, under contract with NASA. It was expanded and pressurized and will be tested as the

future home of astronauts or space tourists (Navarro, 2016).

For suborbital trips, each flight requires a specific vessel, reaching an altitude of 100 kilometres before returning to Earth. It takes from 2.5 to 3 hours and at the highest point, passengers experience weightlessness for about five minutes. In that time, they can enjoy views of the Earth, planets and stars, without the filter of the atmosphere. Private companies such as Armadillo Aerospace, Blue Origin, and xcor Aerospace are actively testing vessels for suborbital flights; the leading company for executing suborbital flight is currently Virgin Galactic. In 2004, the company successfully launched the Virgin Galactic SpaceShipOne craft to an altitude of over 100 km. Their SpaceShipTwo craft can carry six passengers to an altitude of 110 km (Burić & Bojkić, 2007). To date, Virgin Galactic has already received more than 700 passenger pre-orders. The price for a suborbital flight per person ranges from \$200,000 to \$250,000 (US) (Virgin Galactic, 2014). Their future services also offer over 140 accredited 'space tourist' agencies from all continents. While test flights were carried out from an airstrip in Mojave, California, future suborbital flights will launch from Spaceport America, established in New Mexico. Spaceport America is the first airport dedicated to commercial spaceflight. According to the Futron research company, it is predicted that there will be 15,000 suborbital flight passengers per year by 2021, representing annual revenues of more than \$700 million (Beard & Starzyk, 2002).

Tickets for space flights will initially be purchased by wealthy individuals, but in the future, price reductions will also be accessible to others. As the fares for suborbital flights drop to \$10,000, there could be up to one million passengers per year. As with orbital flights, suborbital flights can also generate revenue in addition to ticket sales. One firm, Orbital Outfitters, has developed specialized aerospace garments both for spacecraft passengers and the crew of suborbital flights (Giacalone, 2013).

To date, only 24 people have ever left Earth orbit and journeyed close to the Moon. The last people to walk on the Moon were Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt, who left it on December 14, 1972. Since then,

no one has been closer to the Moon than low Earth orbit. The company Space Adventures want to change that. Using flight-proven Russian space vehicles, they intend to fly two private citizens and one professional cosmonaut on a free return trajectory around the far side of the Moon. Space Adventures expect to launch their first mission before the end of the decade.

To date, no manned mission has ever been undertaken to any of the other planets of the solar system. The main problem, decreasing the travel time, has not yet been resolved. It is highly unlikely that space tourists will fly to Mars in the coming decades, but not impossible. NASA (2015) is developing the capabilities needed to send humans to an asteroid by 2025 and Mars in the 2030s; these goals are outlined in the bipartisan *NASA Authorization Act of 2010* and the US National Space Policy, also issued in 2010. Recently, a number of private initiatives advocating the private exploration of Mars were proposed. The simplest missions, proposed by the non-profit organization Inspiration Mars Foundation, is a space cruise for two people on a 501-day Mars flyby travel. The main goals are to generate excitement about space travel and test technologies necessary for landing on Mars in the future. Furthermore, SpaceX plans to establish a Mars colony in a more distant (but not too distant) future. The long-term goal is establishing a settlement of up to 80,000 people. This huge enterprise would be made possible by the reusable rocket SpaceX is building. The explicitly declared goal is that of contributing to the birth of a multiplanet, spacefaring civilization (Genta, 2014, p. 484).

Safety in Space Tourism

As with other types of tourism, space tourism must also take into account all the different aspects of safety. The history of spaceflight teaches us that it is a hazardous human activity, which hides many potential dangers. Proof comes from several high-profile spacecraft accidents, such as the Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia tragedies, not to mention accidents related to the rocket launch preparations, psychophysical issues for astronauts and cosmonauts, damage to vessels while in orbit, etc. When considering the safety of space tourism, scientific studies focus on the

areas of science or technology specific to the psychophysical (medical) requirements that must be met by future space tourists to avoid potential problems during flight. In the 1990s, the Japanese Rocket Society's (JRS) development of spacecraft for tourism purposes took into account the safety standards required for a tourist trip into space (Torikai et al., 1999). Manufacturers of spacecraft technologies pursue a standard of safety and reliability, which are comparable to the modern aircraft intended for commercial flight (Sawaya, 2004). The technological aspects of safety are also emphasized by Zakarija et al. (2011), identifying the advantages and disadvantages of vertical take offs and landings by commercial spacecraft. Just as safety in air traffic is regulated, internationally comparable standards for tourist flights into space will also be required. Various organisations dealing with space flight have a range of approaches and standards, which is another reason for creating a single umbrella global space agency to regulate and unify the legal standards in this area. Currently, the *International Space Safety Standards* (Sgobba, 2008), *Introduction to the Australian Space Safety Regime* (The Space Licensing and Safety Office, 2009) and *Space Safety Standard: Commercial Human-Rated System* (International Association for the Improvement of Space Safety, 2010) exist. There will be significant issues concerning spacecraft licensing arrangements and their use in both suborbital as well as orbital flight (Pelton, 2007; Crowther, 2011). The development of space tourism represents a challenge to the insurance industry. New risks in tourist flights bring new requirements to this economic area, which will have to deal with new security management and pre-spaceflight preparations with significantly greater dynamism (Bensoussan, 2010).

Various theorists (Apel, 1999; Marsh, 2006; Kluge, Trammer, Stern, & Gerzer, 2013) prioritize medical guidelines due to the extreme nature of space tourism trips. It is anticipated that the biomedical perspective for commercial spaceflight will very quickly influence the minimum legal requirements for safe travel. Above all, it will be necessary to consider the medical dilemmas of how to deal with cases of accidents and emergencies related to space tourism.

As a result of new tourism services, while there is

still no specific typology of space tourists, analysts seek meaningful correlations between space tourism and other forms of tourism. Previous references to safety and risk are related to adventure and extreme tourism (Fluker, 2005; Buckley, 2006; Spennemann, 2007; Ziliotto 2010; Reddy, Nica, & Wilkes, 2012). One can look for common characteristics between space, adventure and extreme tourism in the areas of preparation, risk, hazards, and pricing (Kemp, 2007). Research studies indicate that adventure tourists would travel to space for, among other reasons, the adrenaline rush and risk, just as mountain climbers, divers and parachutists do (Crouch, 2001). Dunk (2013) also describes adventure tourism in the context of space tourism safety, warning that this element will also need to be considered in legislation, or where it does not exist, it will need to be created.

Many authors (Malik, 2008; Pelton & Gini, 2012; Pultarova, 2013; Rakobowchuk, 2013; Courage, 2014; Fuller, 2008; Powers, 2014) deal with the existing safety issues, especially in suborbital tourism, noting the safety issues faced by so-called space companies (Virgin Galactic, Armadillo Aerospace, Blue Origin, xcor Aerospace) in preparing commercial tourists for space flights in the near future.

Improvements in overall safety and the development of new safety standards in scientific research flights into space are still largely the responsibility of state space agencies, especially those who conduct flights, for example, the American NASA, the European ESA, the Russian Roskosmos and the Chinese CNSA space agency. Private companies with plans for tourist flights into space receive ample descriptions and practically verified information regarding travel into space from these agencies.

Participating commercial and state-backed space-care institutions cooperate via the Commercial Spaceflight Federation (CSF), which was founded in 2007 in the US and today comprises over forty companies and organizations. The association's mission is to promote commercial manned flight into space, to develop a higher level of safety and to exchange experiences and best practices in the aerospace industry. In the US and Europe particularly, there are also a few specialized organizations that deal with various aspects

of cognition, development, and safety improvements during space flight.

The International Association for the Improvement of Space Safety (IAASS) was founded in 2005 in the Netherlands. It is a non-profit organization aimed at promoting international cooperation and scientific developments in the field of space systems safety. The agency's sponsors are the ESA, NASA, Roskosmos, the Japanese Space Agency (JAXA), the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), German Space Agency (DLR), and the Italian Space Agency (ASI). Approximately every two years the association holds a major international conference on security in space (Pelton, 2007).

Like the IAASS, the International Foundation for Space Security (ISSF) is a non-profit organization. Its research and projects are focused on the safety of space flight, spacecraft safety, ground staff, passengers, crew, and cargo.

They aim for responsible attitudes towards space, especially in the orbital environment. The Federal Civil Aviation Authority (FAA) is the United States' largest national and civil aviation administrative institution. It was founded in 1958. The Office of Security and Hazardous Materials Safety (OSHMS) works within the administration, protecting the facilities and staff of the FAA from criminal and terrorist acts; it is responsible for airports, air transport, air safety and commercial transportation into space. In the latter case, its task is primarily to ensure safe take-off and landing by vessels while in the Earth's atmosphere.

A similar body exists in Europe, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The European Union was founded in 2003 with its headquarters in Cologne. EASA regulates and maintains control of civil aviation safety in Europe. The scope of spaceflight legislation in Europe is monitored by the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL), which was founded in 1989 at the initiative of the European Space Agency. It comprises professionals in the fields of aerospace, mainly lawyers, academics, and law students. ECSL encourages discussion and reflection and promotes exchanges of opinions in the field of space legislation.

Given the fact that spaceflight is still in the developmental stage, it is inherently risky for trained astro-

nauts, as well as for tourists. According to Bensoussan (2010) 'Private human spaceflight is like climbing Mount Everest with a lot farther to fall.' Below we summarize some of the security aspects of spaceflight to be taken into consideration for future space tourists. Given the different levels of spaceflight, the terms of safety and risk should consider the stages of preparing the craft for flight, take-off, and landing and spacecraft, or in space stations, in a lower or higher orbit.

From a security point of view, hijacking a spacecraft or placing an explosive device should be almost impossible these days. The volume and weight of luggage carried by space tourists will be limited and strictly inspected to avoid any risk of fire, explosion or contamination. To take a weapon or bomb into orbit is virtually impossible (Pelt, 2005).

Tourists flying into space would be required to carry out certain physical and mental preparation, as all astronauts, scientists and researchers do. For longer flights, passengers must also acquire some technological skills and be able to react in case of complications, danger or accidents. These preparations vary depending on the form, length, and complexity of the flight. Preparations for passengers on suborbital flights are less demanding and much shorter, but compulsory for every passenger to attend. They would comprise a two-day basic program, a two-day follow-up program with in-depth preparation and an additional day for participants learn about the various experiments, space garments, and life support systems, etc. The program includes classroom studies, exercises, and simulations, including a centrifuge-based simulation of acceleration during take-off. Virgin Galactic believes that pre-flight preparation could be shortened to only three days. Each passenger would have to undergo a medical examination, although not to the same complexity as for astronauts. However, passengers with increased health risks would not be able to participate in a suborbital flight (Virgin Galactic, 2014). The company has not published more detailed criteria for space flight.

In contrast to suborbital visits, flights to other Earth orbits require strenuous, months-long preparations, something that all seven previously mentioned space tourists had to complete. Consequently, for space

flight, as well as extended stays in space, and the return to Earth pose a significant stress on the human body and mental health, thus requiring a high degree of mental and physical skills (Anderson, 2005). The fact is that professional astronauts are already selectively chosen from among the very best aircraft pilots (Apel, 1999), and are therefore subject to the strict health requirements that would be required for orbital space tourists.

There is a necessity for intensive physical and other training to acquire tolerance to stress, adapted to age, gender, cultural environment and general fitness. Preparations begin with strict medical examinations, during which experts check the respiratory system, heart function, blood pressure, cholesterol, white blood cell count, levels of enzymes for organ function, balance, and mental stability (Seedhouse, 2008). Several weeks before the flight, the prospective space tourists would be subjected to daily active physical preparations, which include sports training, aerobic exercise, jogging, walking, etc, all with the aim of raising the aerospace passenger's condition, physical fitness, improving cardiovascular system function, increasing the sense of balance, etc. (Seedhouse, 2008). Another crucial part of preparation is a specialized diet to prepare the body for the efforts of the flight and life in space. Preparations also include learning to skydive, scuba diving, adapting to high and low-pressure conditions, and training in a specialized centrifuge to simulate the strong forces on the human body during take-off. The simulator is also used to practice reactions to different situations, different manuals are read, models of the spacecraft and space station are studied, even learning the Russian language, if travelling to the International Space Station with a Russian crew (Burić & Bojkić, 2007).

Risk Factors in Space Tourism

Travel in space is still in its development phase; consequently, the risks are higher when compared with atmospheric flights. Spacecraft take-off and landing are among the greatest potential risks. The risk of a serious event is also emphasized by Alexander Saltman, Executive Director of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation: 'There are going to be dangers that we don't know

about when we start flying. There will be incidents and at some point somebody will lose their life in this industry' (Rakobowchuk, 2013).

For suborbital flights to an altitude of just over 100 km, different companies are developing different systems of take-off and landing. Engineered with vertical take-off rockets, as well as horizontal ones, the spacecraft is attached to a large plane and released at a specific altitude for flights at the edge of space. Each of these modes poses different risks. The main problem is the high-speed that the vessel needs to achieve, requiring large quantities of high quality (but also dangerous) fuel. The forces acting on the spacecraft during take-off are also significantly higher than in civil aircraft.

This is also mirrored for the passenger, who must, therefore, be appropriately prepared mentally and physically. Such factors greatly affect a flight into orbit and thus increase the likelihood of accidents. Commercial space companies aim for safety standards that over time will become similar to those currently applicable in aviation. Therefore, numerous test spacecraft and other technologies are on a quest to minimize the risks of spacecraft during take-off, flight, and landing (Webber, 2010).

An important aspect of understanding spacecraft safety during take-off and landing is the possibility that such vessels may stray from the flight path and threaten populated areas (Seibold et. al., 2008). This was illustrated in the tragic breakup of the space shuttle Columbia in 2003, when falling wreckage threatened not only nearby residents but also airborne civilian aircraft. It is, therefore, important to establish safe space flight corridors, at least while still in the atmosphere.

One proposal, presented in a study by Zakaria et al. (2011), is that spacecraft take-offs and landings be moved to distant locations in seas or oceans and away from populated areas. Take-off could take place vertically, from a specialized ramp, with sea landings by parachute, as frequently happens today. For future space tourists, it is also important that, in the event of an accident, and at any stage of the flight, passengers could escape the spacecraft (Pelt, 2005). Ejection seats are not suitable in this instance due to the high

altitudes; therefore, it will be necessary to develop new ideas. Development in this area is directed towards the design of closed rescue capsules.

During suborbital flights, tourists will reach an altitude of about 100 kilometres with a five to seven-minute descent to Earth. Therefore, at this level, they are minimally exposed to normal risks, in comparison with orbital passengers who survive in space for several days, weeks or months. For orbital tourist flights, current spacecraft are adapted for scientific space exploration and operated by professional astronauts or cosmonauts. In orbit, passengers are exposed to hazards ranging from physiological changes to orbital debris threatening the spacecraft itself (International Space University, 2000). Among the factors for increased safety and reducing the danger during the orbital flight that need to be taken into account, are the requirements for a suitable living environment within the vessel, radiation, weightlessness, orbital debris, and meteors.

Spacecraft must provide suitable living conditions. Since all spacecraft are sealed, controlled air pressure is continuously required in the vessel to provide a safe, breathable atmosphere. Major changes in air pressure can cause pain or serious injury. Passengers must be equipped with specialized garments in case of decompression (Grabianowski, 2008). Particularly important is appropriate air pressure within the spacesuit for when a passenger leaves the vessel. It is also necessary to continuously monitor air quality because there is a risk of contamination with toxic substances. Equally important is a water supply for drinking and hygiene, as there may only be a limited supply of this liquid on board. Another particular risk and serious threat to a vessel and its passengers is a fire within the spaceship or space station.

In space, there are constant levels of intense radiation emitted by solar plasma eruptions, solar wind, and cosmic radiation, etc. The Earth's magnetic field protects the planet from such radiation; however, this protection does not exist in space. For passengers undertaking shorter suborbital flights, radiation will not have a significant effect. For longer orbital flights, radiation can pose a problem. Astronauts staying in low-Earth orbit (from 200 to 2000 km) receive the same

amount of radiation in one week as a person on Earth receives in one year (Pelt, 2005). Thicker spacecraft walls provide protection against radiation, along with frequent monitoring for powerful bursts of solar radiation. In particular, considerable attention would need to be given to the effects of strong radiation on space-suited passengers when leaving the spacecraft.

The sensation of weightlessness, which is one of the most valuable experiences in space and one of the main motivators for tourist space flights, could also cause difficulties and inconvenience to the travellers. Symptoms such as dizziness, drowsiness or Space Adaptation Syndrome (SAS) or 'space sickness' is caused by excess blood in the head, which would otherwise flow towards the feet by gravity. Weightlessness causes muscle numbness and weakens the bones. Astronauts have also reported poorer sleep in weightlessness with resulting depression and confusion. Particular attention should, therefore, be given to passengers spending longer periods in space. After living in weightlessness, people returning to Earth have difficulties with independent walking for some time.

Since spaceflight began, there has been a growing problem of pollution due to orbital debris in space, which, according to some estimates, number over 100,000 pieces (International Space University, 2000). These are satellite remnants, space station waste, lost parts, etc. Since flying at high speed is a constant threat to spacecraft, damage can be caused. Thick spacecraft walls and smaller windows (which space tourists will definitely want, at any size) can offer greater protection. It is necessary to consider the flight direction of such spacecraft, thus planning for panoramic windows on board future orbital tourist spacecraft or hotels is an important safety consideration (International Space University, 2000).

A large number of smaller or larger meteors exist in space, which can seriously damage or even destroy a spacecraft. Individual meteors in the Earth's orbit are rare, but occasionally meteor showers do occur, which can endanger a vessel or station. There are cases in which such meteors have destroyed satellites (Pelt, 2005). Thankfully, the majority of the meteor showers orbiting the Sun are known, and it is possible to predict their direction. Similar to space debris, meteors

also present a significant hazard for space hotels and development of some form of mechanical protection against them will be required.

Conclusion

The scientific literature on safety in space tourism is limited as this is a new form of tourism, still in the development stage. At this time, there are too few tourists who have travelled to space for in-depth empirical studies and conclusions on space tourism safety, and even those who have been were limited to orbital flight. In reviewing the literature, we did not find reports that study the safety of space tourism in the broader context of global security.

Experience with scientific research-based space flights can significantly contribute to the safer design and execution of tourist flights into space. The major concern regarding these experiences is that they are based on the professional, highly trained and well-prepared men and women who have travelled into space. Typical space tourists will clearly not achieve such a level of preparedness, such that tourist flights into space (training, spacecraft, food, sleep, leisure, etc.) make it necessary for proposals on a different basis, adjusted for abilities, ages, also the interests, wishes, and requirements of future space tourists. It will also be necessary to consider the potential dangers, as space remains a highly dangerous environment where the smallest problem can quickly develop into a disaster of unpredictable dimensions.

In addition, it is important to consider that space tourism is only in its infancy and that any major incident (at least for some time) will discourage or halt the interest of potential space passengers, thus also increasing the economic obstacles in this new emerging industry. Furthermore, by anticipating potential problems, eliminating them, along with negative public opinion, space tourism could learn a lot from extreme and adventure tourism.

Ewert and Hollenhorst (1997) have investigated the impact of risks and hazards as elements in decision-making by adventurous tourists who venture into the unknown and unexplored wilderness. They especially point out that awareness of danger sharpens concentration on a trip, but in many ways, it also affects the

decisions, processes, and relationships between participants, etc. Given the risks of adventure travel, there are some contradictions. All providers of such trips first emphasize the element of safety, but the hidden risks also encourage tourists to join up. How this paradox has, nevertheless, allowed adventure tourism to operate successfully has been researched by Fletcher (2010). He found that providers often emphasize only one element (or security risk), while others are concealed.

An essential element of safety in space tourism will, in addition to technological processes and human factors, also include preparation and adoption of relevant safety standards. Uniform safety standards must consider all the companies and organizations developing commercial spacecraft and space tourism service. Today's standards require guidance from conventional space travel; adjustment and optimization for tourist flights will be required. The foundations of safety standards in space tourism can be drawn from standards that currently apply to civil aviation. It will be necessary, of course, to improve and establish appropriate safety in the space tourism industry, requiring continual research, both in terms of new space technologies, medicine, psychology, sociology, sustainable development as well as in the many forms of safety and security.

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The Aquaculture Industry and Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism

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Tourism is an important industry in the growth of GDP in many countries, while aquaculture covers more than half of the demand for fish in the developed world. The demand and competition for farmed fish are increasing worldwide, as is the awareness of the importance of the further development of sustainable small business. In this view, innovation is crucial to promoting sustainable business models that can achieve a solid economic performance and at the same time take care of the natural environment. This article contributes to the literature on sustainable business models with a descriptive case study of the complementarity of a single fish farming company and tourism activities. The case study of a sustainable business model in aquaculture has been analysed with the use of a business model canvas that links various market-oriented elements of a business model with different stakeholders' needs.

Keywords: aquaculture, tourism, brand, development, sustainability, business model canvas, co-natural processes

Introduction

Aquaculture is one of the fastest growing food-producing industries, accounting for about half of the total fish supply (FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, 2012; Fischer, Jorgensen, Josupeit, Kalikoski, & Lucas, 2015) and fish is traditionally considered to be healthy. There are some uncertainties about the specific health benefits of some nutrients in seafood, but it is accepted that seafood consumption is a key part of a healthy diet. In most countries around the world, the health benefits of eating fish are recognized by experts and the public alike (Schlag & Ystgaard, 2013; Scientific, Technical and Economic Com-

mittee for Fisheries, 2014). One of the aims of the KnowUs Interreg research project was to develop and test methodologies, instruments, and procedures for creating strategic-cognitive maps of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The methodology that was developed within the project originates from a pre-existing methodological model known as a Competitive Knowledge Audit, developed by researchers at the University Cà Foscari of Venice, in cooperation with companies from Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia (Bagnoli, 2012; Know Us, 2013).

We present a case study from the food and agriculture sector: Fonda.si LLC (Fonda.si) as an exem-

plary case study of a sustainable business model (BM) (Dravinec, 2015; Janeš, 2014b; Lagorio, 2012; Trebar Lotrič, Fonda, Pleteršek, & Kovačič, 2013), whose activities have become interconnected with tourism. Fonda.si, as a family-owned aquaculture company, has grown into a successful small business. It was founded by Mr Ugo Fonda 40 years ago; he has been succeeded by his daughter Irena and son Leon. Fonda.si created a unique niche in the market through the sale of 80% of their products in Slovenia; the remaining share of sales is 10% in Austria and 10% in Italy. Some years ago, they opened a franchise farm in Croatian Osor in the Cres Island and expanded aquaculture facilities in the Bay of Piran. The fish brand *Piran Seabass* has been developed with the vision of acquiring the title of 'the best fish in the world' (Janeš & Biloslavo, 2013; Janeš & Trnavčević, 2014). In 2016 they sold the company to an Italian-owned enterprise Valle Ca' Zuliani, which has a similar philosophy. The new owners paid off the debt and capitalized the company. They are planning to expand the farm from 50 to 200 tonnes of fish per year (Marn, 2016).

Literature Review

Aquaculture Tourism

Coastal waters are a precious resource for multiple human activities, such as leisure, recreation, sailing, tourism, fishing and, recently, aquaculture. Socio-economic conflict can be exacerbated by the high pressure of tourism and the need for the proper management of natural resources. Stephanou (1999) states that 'tourism and marine aquaculture interact both positively and negatively on each other and an integrated approach is advisable on coastal zones.' Deniz (2001) calls for planning and implementing a strategy to manage conflict between aquaculture and other stakeholders as aquaculture facilities were placed in the protected shallow bays, which resulted in visual and organic pollution, and thus caused conflicts between aquaculture entrepreneurs and other users. The issue of environmental sustainability is particularly appropriate in planning for the development of long-term coastal tourism. Holistic integrated coastal zone management delineates different uses of coastal zones, such as tourism, fishing, and aquaculture (Primav-

era, 2006). Miller and Hadley (2005) assert that better understandings of tourism-aquaculture interactions could lead to an improvement in single-sector governance with partially integrated coastal management. The research of Nimmo, Cappell, Huntington, & Grant (2011) provided 'qualitative evidence that the current levels and future developments or expansion of aquaculture operations will not affect visitors' willingness to re-visit the case study sites or affect their key recreational activities.'

Sustainability and Innovation

There is no doubt that sustainability has become the strategic imperative of the new millennium and that it encompasses a holistic approach in which issues of social, financial, health-related and educational sustainability underpin the fundamental notion of environmental sustainability. As companies increasingly link sustainability with long-term business performance, sustainability is of growing interest in the area of performance management (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2013). Sustainability is the ability of an organization or a system to maintain a certain level of performance for a long-term period without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Barnard & Van der Merwe 2016, p. 210; Bocken et al., 2013; Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015; Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, & Hillier, 2008; Wagner & Svensson, 2014). Sustainability and with it sustainable BMs are today a necessity more than a niche (Kozłowski, Searcy, & Bardecki, 2015, p. 378). However, the application of sustainable for-profit organizations, in general, continues to be a highly-debated topic. Concerns have been raised regarding the necessary changes needed to integrate sustainability into a BM from the very beginning of the product design process as in the case of Fonda's Piran seabass (Fonda, 2013a; Kozłowski et al., 2015).

From an SME perspective, innovation frequently refers either to new products or processes, which address customer needs more competitively and profitably than existing solutions do. The principal source of successful innovation is the knowledge and experience of people within an SME, in particular the innovation orientation of the owner/manager (Cum-

mins, Gilmore, Carson, & O'Donnell, 2000; O'Dwyer, Gilmore, & Carson, 2009; Galpin et al., 2015; Guo, Zhao, & Tang, 2013). Smith-Sebasto and Shebitz (2013) defined sustainable innovation as one that addresses sustainability issues and promotes continued naturally and socially acceptable rates of economic growth. Sustainable orientation and sustainable innovation represent key factors for an SME's profitability and long-term growth that is based on the understanding and fulfilment of stakeholders' interests (O'Dwyer et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2013). At the same time, it is evident that product and process innovation no longer offer sufficient advantage over competitors in the long run (McGrath, 2011). Competitors are quickly able to copy innovations, product life cycles are becoming shorter, and competitors from low-wage countries have considerable cost and consequently price advantages. At the same time, information and communication technologies (ICTs), offer unprecedented opportunities to rearrange value creation activities in new and different ways. Hence, companies consider business model innovation as an opportunity to build sustainable competitive advantage (Teece, 2010) as well as to reconsider them in a more environmentally friendly view (OECD, 2012).

Business Model and Innovation

A need for innovating existing BM can be found in Porter's statement that only companies that succeed in building a sustained competitive advantage will be successful in the long run (Porter, 1996); this implies performing different activities than their competitors or similar activities in different ways (Porter, 1996; Lindgren, Falck Saghaug, & Knudsen, 2009; Philipson, 2016). Therefore, a company's value creation and distribution processes need to be differentiated from its competitors.

BM as a managerial concept has three common themes: (1) it emphasizes a holistic approach to explaining how companies 'perform business,' (2) it focuses on companies themselves; and (3) it explains value propositions, creation and value capture (Chesbrough 2007; Biloslavo, 2014; Guo et al., 2013; Pels & Kidd, 2015, p. 202; Zott, Amit, & Massa, 2011).

Magretta (2002) defines BM as the answers to the

questions of who the company's customer is, what the customer values, how the company captures value, and which economic logic explains the way that value is being delivered to customers at an acceptable cost. In the review of Zott et al. (2011), a common viewpoint of different definitions has emerged, that BM is a 'system level concept centred on activities and focused on value.'

Every company has a BM, whether it articulates it or not. At its heart, a BM performs two essential functions: value creation and value capture. A BM explains who your customers are, how you provide value to them and how you will retain part of that value. In contrast, strategy identifies how you will outperform competitors by being different. The BM includes the key components of a business plan, but the business plan comprises a number of additional operational issues that go beyond the BM; a BM is not a business strategy, but it also includes some elements of the strategy; a BM is not a business process, although it is a part of it (Abraham, 2013; Biloslavo 2014, p. 17; Chesbrough, 2007; Guo et al., 2013; Teece, 2010).

Between the BM, business strategy, and business processes, there is a kind of hierarchical relationship with the business strategy at the top, the BM underneath and business processes on the bottom. When a company develops its business strategy, it simultaneously develops its BM. However, if the company develops its BM, it does not mean that it has also developed its own business strategy, which seems like a logical consideration that also applies to the relationship between BMs and business processes (Biloslavo, 2014). Trimi and Berbergal-Mirabent (2012) argue that BM research 'does not only consist of discovering how to create a more successful business, but in exploring how companies can better learn from their own experience and improve their entrepreneurial outcomes.'

The BM concept also has some limitations. For example, it does not help an organization to develop a growth strategy in terms of acquisitions, mergers or diversification. For the aforementioned issues, strategic analysis and appropriate strategic planning are still needed (Abraham, 2013; Bocken et al., 2013, pp. 483, 489; Elkington, 1997; Hargadon, 2015; Biloslavo, 2014; Wagner & Svensson, 2014; White, 2009).

Österwalder, Pigneur, and Tucci (2005) and later Österwalder and Pigneur (2010) proposed a conceptual tool called 'a BM canvas' that helps companies to visualize, understand and innovate their BMS. Using a BM canvas makes it possible to evaluate the business idea together with different aspects: creation process and financial aspects, added value and customer relationships. With the use of the canvas, companies can assess where their current BM stands in relation to its potential, and afterward they can define appropriate next steps for the further development of that model.

In our research, a BM canvas was used as a narrative framework for a description of the Fonda fish farm. Key elements of the BM canvas applied were adapted from the popular canvas developed by Österwalder and Pigneur (2010) who defined BM based on nine (9) elements: customer segments, value proposition, distribution channels, customer relations, key resources, key activities, partnerships, revenues streams, and cost structure. According to Österwalder and Pigneur (2010), a BM describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value. One benefit of this definition is that each of its nine elements identifies where innovation might generate new value in an industry (Abraham, 2013; Biloslavo, 2014; Bocken et al., 2013; Chesbrough, 2007; Österwalder & Pigneur 2010). The building blocks of the BM canvas provide a schematic and comprehensive view of a business process, and Österwalder's canvas approach has been widely recognized by scholars and practitioners and empirically validated (Boillat & Legner, 2013; Zott et al., 2011).

However, Österwalder's BM canvas also has some serious limitations. The first is its linearity (its shape is neither a circle nor a triangle) that somehow de-emphasizes feedbacks that exist between various elements of the BM in practice. The second is that it does not consider society, which is a critical aspect for every BM, even more so considering general concerns about sustainability and a need for innovation. The third is that, within the value proposition, the author defines the value proposition itself as well as products that a company offers to the market.

In order to tackle these limitations, we applied

an enhanced BM canvas that emphasizes three main ideas:

1. Product innovations based on technology are important (technology pushes innovation at the level of products) but simultaneously design-driven innovation (Verganti, 2009) is also important. When discussing innovation, generally people refer to technology and to the product as an artefact.
2. Product innovations are important but probably BM innovations are even more so (e.g. Dell, Ikea, RyanAir, Nespresso). BMS are important both when you have technology innovations but also when you have design-driven innovations. BMS are not very important if you are developing a market-pull innovation since, generally, you do not need to change your BM to answer customers' requests (i.e. usually these changes represent incremental innovation).
3. The role of society is critically significant for BM innovation and superior business performance. By facing social issues, a company can generate new ideas about how to solve its business problems. Furthermore, if a company is able to satisfy the needs of society, it could be easier for it to satisfy the needs of its customers.

It has been argued by Massa & Tucci (2014) that an innovative BM is needed to commercialize new ideas and technologies. A better BM will often beat a better product or technology. Existing approaches to sustainability may be relevant for specific aspects of value design and delivery, but BM innovation offers a more holistic perspective that incorporates all three dimensions of sustainability (i.e. social, environmental, and economic). As with some other interdisciplinary topics, sustainable BMS are frequently mentioned but rarely analysed (Teece, 2010, p. 192). Therefore, presenting and interpreting practical examples of BMS in the form of study cases is eminently valid (Philipson, 2016, p. 136). BM innovation is regarded as the process of (re-)aligning and/or changing the BM and its inherent parts in response to internal and external stimuli (Kindström & Kowalkowski, 2014). A true BM innovation requires some substan-

tive changes to the value proposition, products, and processes. Further development of the circular economy, an industrial economy that is producing no waste and pollution, can be sustained only if businesses will be able to innovate existing BMS.

Fish Farming

Fish farming has a long history in the Mediterranean region, with evidence of capture and feeding going back over 2000 years. Seabass and seabream are produced in most of the twenty-plus Mediterranean countries. Farmed seabass and seabream producers tend to be SMEs; most companies are still relatively small, as 90% of the employees are employed in companies with less than ten employees. These companies are often family owned and have no or very limited intention to increase production. Consequently, large investments to increase production are not possible for many of these businesses due to the lack of capital or market demand. Although some larger organizations have emerged as the sector has developed; food supply from aquaculture is expanding while wild fish yields diminish because of overexploitation and migration (Fischer et al. 2015). According to the observation of Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (2014), only a limited number of countries expect substantial growth in the sector despite the general desire by EU member states to expand production (Schlag & Ystgaard, 2013; Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 2014, pp. 14–18; Wagner & Young, 2009).

In general, European consumers have little knowledge or awareness regarding the origin of fish. This results in uncertainty in consumers' perception of farmed fish in particular. This case study is in line with other research, suggesting that perceptions of aquaculture and farmed fish are based more on emotions than on rational considerations. Still, the perception of farmed fish is positive in general (Fonda, 2013a, 2013b). Consumers do not prioritize fish origin as an information cue during the fish purchase and consumption decision process, although variation is present between different consumer groups (Honkanen & Olsen, 2009; Vanhonacker, Altintzoglou, Luten, & Verbeke, 2011).

The more environmentally concerned consumers

are willing to pay a premium for fish products sourced from fisheries that are managed in a sustainable manner (Janeš & Biloslavo, 2013; Janeš & Trnavčević, 2014). Recently, another important value concept that is linked to sustainability issues has increasingly gained importance on the market: good traceability systems decrease the probability of a certain food safety problem and provide an opportunity to improve the overall level of food safety. Companies could benefit from traceability systems associated with quality and safety assurance mechanisms (Honkanen & Olsen, 2009; Mai, Bogason, Arason, Árnason, & Matthíasson, 2010; Trebar et al. 2013). The finding that the consumers are concerned about fish welfare issues, in general, may indicate that fish welfare and sustainability in farming are an up-and-coming issue among consumers (Ellingsen et al. 2015; Thøgersen, Haugaard, & Olesen, 2010).

The findings of Pieniak, Verbeke, Scholderer, Brunsø, and Olsen (2008) indicate that European consumers are very interested in health and healthy eating. Health involvement is found to be an indirect driver of both subjective health and fish consumption, whilst interest in healthy eating emerges as a direct driver of fish consumption behaviour. Thus, reinforcing existing health beliefs might be important in the development of effective strategies and communication for stimulating fish consumption.

Due to natural circumstances, the development of marine fish farming in Slovenia is limited. Mariculture takes place in the Bay of Strunjan, the Bay of Debeli Rtič with shellfish farming, and in the Bay of Piran with fish and shellfish farming. Slovenian mariculture practice is traditional; fish farming takes place in cages submerged in the sea, while mussel farming takes place in lines of floating buoys linked together (Fonda, 2013a; Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 2014, p. 333).

About ten enterprises are dealing with shellfish farming in Slovenia, and only one enterprise is engaged in fish farming. Natural circumstances and conservation requirements in Slovenia do not allow the development of large industrial fish farms. The establishment of an organization of producers would make it easier to obtain knowledge and new technology as

well as reduce market costs (Janeš & Biloslavo, 2013; Janeš & Trnavčević, 2014).

All Slovenian maritime fish and shellfish farms are currently operating at about 50% of capacity. In the future, an increment of production to maximum capacity can be expected followed by the possible stagnation of Slovenian marine aquaculture, while fresh water fish farms have yet to develop their potential because Slovenia has plenty of clean, fresh water resources (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 2014, p. 342).

Methods

In this paper, the interpretivist paradigm was followed, and an inductive narrative approach based on a single case study was applied (Yin, 1994). A paradigmatic case of a specific sustainable BM has been chosen. In view of Baden-Fuller and Morgan's (2010) definition, a BM represents a model for business description and scientific investigation that is to be filled with proper data. According to this definition, we used the BM canvas as a discussion point for the in-depth workshops and interviews and then populated it with the data provided by the participant during the research workshops. The collected data were later analysed by use of content analysis.

Fonda accepted the invitation and participated in workshops (Bocken et al., 2013), in which a semi-structured in-depth interview with the executive manager was conducted (Bocken et al., 2013; Guo et al., 2013). Interviews were agreed and scheduled with Ms Irena Fonda, co-owner and manager of the Fonda Company, and conducted between January and March 2013. The interviews lasted for two hours (Kvale, 2007), and the following themes were explored:

- sustainable innovation activity;
- the company's BM; and
- sustainability drivers of the BM.

Prior to the interview, the interviewee received some generic questions by e-mail to guide and adequately prepare her for the interview. The interview included questions about the company's history, sustainability, innovation and key turning points in the organizational lifecycle. In particular, the most in-

novative practices of the company's BM were investigated, as recognized by the company itself. Using the canvas method for BMS, mapping of the company's vision and strategic knowledge was performed. In order to implement strategic innovation of the BM, it is necessary to find answers to several questions, but it is always required to start with the question: 'Why do we exist and what is our goal?' This is followed by the question: 'When to redesign the BM?' After the need for BM innovation has been acknowledged questions relating to characteristics of the existing BM are following. Questions are classified according to the key elements of the BM (Bagnoli, 2012). In this way, the canvas was used for a description of the BM with a set of seven key elements: stakeholders, business partners, key resources, business processes, products, customer segments, and the value proposition (Bocken et al., 2013, pp. 483, 489; Elkington, 1997; Janeš, 2014b; White, 2009).

The first interview was dedicated to the visualization of the present situation in the company (i.e. 'as-is') and represented a starting point for the second interview, which was aimed at the design of the future desired state (i.e. 'to-be') by innovating the existing BM. Interviews were recorded, with the approval of the interviewee, and then transcribed and analysed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2007; Janeš & Biloslavo, 2013; Janeš & Trnavčević, 2014). The method of semi-structured interviews was supplemented with the participation of the researchers in the company and by collecting documentation and articles discussing the company's history and business activities (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000; Janeš, 2014a; Bocken et al., 2013). The developed BM canvas was analysed and discussed as a single case study. The latter was sent to the company-interviewee for confirmation and authorization (Janeš, 2014b).

Results and Discussion

Co-Natural Innovation Activity of the Enterprise

The Fonda fish farm is located in the Bay of Piran, which lies in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea. This bay is different from other bays due to its clean waters and strong sea current which is oriented to the north along the east coast of the Adriatic. The contribution

from a mild Mediterranean climate and the marine ecosystem is responsible for the unique climatic conditions. In winter, the temperature of the sea drops between 6 °C to 8 °C, with the result that the fish stop eating in some winter months, and thus they become physically 'cleaned.' For this reason, the growth of the fish is slower. The Bay of Piran has a natural protection from the northern and southern winds because it is flanked by Cape Savudrija and Piran's Punta. To have enough space and continuous flow of fresh water for seabass, the fish farm was built in the middle of the sea instead of in the offshore basins. Fish farm net cages extend to a depth of 11 m and comprise a diameter of 8 m to 12 m. These standard sizes, which are set by the members of the Fonda family, represent improved aquaculture conditions. In each net cage, there are usually twenty thousand fry, which means that they have relatively large space for their development, as it would be possible to have many more juveniles in a cage of this size.

Fish farming in net cages is advantageous over other methods as it is relatively easily managed and requires less space and capital investment. Seabass fry reared under controlled conditions face competition among individuals for food and space leading to uneven growth and causing cannibalism. Optimizing feeding frequency and ration size play a major role in regulating the feed intake, reduction in size heterogeneity and waste outputs of fish. All these facts result in a higher quality of fish and increased production efficiency. The commercial success of aquaculture operation largely depends on the growth and survival of the fish under culture. As feed is the most significant cost involved, performing farming with its maximum conversion into fish growth in a cost-effective approach is emphasized (Biswas, Thirunavukkarasu, Sundaray, & Kailasam, 2010).

These procedures assure sustainable farming and the business' organic growth. Today's customer is becoming very sensitive to information about the origin of food, which potentially represents a major competitive advantage.

The company has developed a marketing slogan: 'Natural, delicious and healthy!' to best describe Fonda's farmed fish. Their sustainable innovation activities

are based on the holistic marketing approach that includes a set of influential factors. The innovative marketing process is unique in the world and is characterized by the first branded fish from a small farm sold through the Internet. Ms Fonda says: 'We carry out a lot of things that are really different from what others are doing, like traceability and guarantee, as well as offering our seabass online. Customers place their orders through the internet and receive delivery at home in a very nice, neat package.'

SME literature acknowledges that small companies' competitive advantage lies in the development of innovative products or processes, which is reliant on accurate market and customer information. Therefore, SMEs cannot be competitive using economies of scale for obvious reasons. Creative, alternative, and instinctive marketing practices can flourish under financial resource constraints (Low & MacMillan, 1988; O'Dwyer et al., 2009).

One of the important steps of their innovative approach was that they gave the fish a geographical origin, and raised a brand for Fonda's Piran seabass (Lagorio, 2012, p. 37; Janeš, 2014b; Trebar et al., 2013). Researchers argue that consumer-perceived brand innovativeness might develop a sustainable competitive advantage for a company. Companies can use different elements or their combination (e.g. look, colour, feel, taste, logo, design, and brand name properties) to signal brand innovativeness (Danneels & Kleinschmidt, 2001; Shams, Alpert, & Brown, 2015, pp. 1589–1590, 2591; Verganti, 2008). Fonda, as a small producer that cannot compete on price promotion (Monfort, 2007), developed a brand for a seabass, which is grown in a sustainable manner with the highest quality standards, marketed and sold via exclusive distribution channels. All this is strongly supported by effective storytelling that includes the owner's family history and that of the Bay of Piran's. This approach is their true source of sustainable innovations; no other company in the industry employs a similar approach.

Certification schemes that help the consumers in the sustainability of their choices are useful in some countries, where there is demand for eco-labelled products (Koos, 2011; Thøgersen et al., 2010) but in others, e.g. Portugal, it might be more effective to com-

plement it by promoting food traditions that are still good alternatives for the marine resources (Almeida, Altintzoglou, Cabral, & Vaz, 2015).

Dobson and Regier (2007) discuss the sustainability of fisheries through the adoption of a broader ethical approach, identified the role of science and risk assessment, the public trust doctrine and other factors, and recommend further collaboration of all stakeholders so that their joint efforts result in 'sustainable and equitably shared fisheries.'

Hayes, Lence, and Stoppa (2004) emphasize that farmer-owned brands could be profitable for farmers and discuss the importance of restricting the supply of any successful brand. Aurier, Fort, and Sirieix (2005) investigate the food products' local origin ('terroir') as a differentiation factor and company's added value and demonstrate that the terroir indication could influence the perceived quality and benefit from the recognized regional brand's imaginary.

Fonda's next innovative step was the establishment of an online store, which remains a unique innovation. Their products can be delivered on the Slovenian coast all the way to Ljubljana and Carinthia (Austria) and to the west of Trieste (Italy) and its surroundings (Lagorio, 2012, p. 37).

Fonda is unique in the world in terms of its farming and marketing approach, and in particular with its distribution method. They have customers who rarely buy fish and those who have a regular subscription to do so. The latter also do not need a particular booking for each order, because they receive fish at their homes or restaurants regularly. This ongoing form of ordering was suggested by a customer. This kind of business model innovation involves innovating in the company's strategic level, e.g. eliminating intermediaries and going directly to customers (Pels & Kidd, 2015, p. 204; Altintzoglou & Nøstvold, 2014).

However, instead of focusing on the traditional 4P marketing paradigm, or the 7Ps adopted by service marketing, entrepreneurs stress the importance of promotion, in particular through word-of-mouth. Entrepreneurs have identified one of the unique selling points of their business as the nature of their personal contact with customer, and their focus on the instinctive understanding that networking with outside indi-

viduals, associations and companies enables them to be successful; therefore, entrepreneurs use networking as an intrinsic marketing tool (Stokes, 2000; O'Dwyer et al., 2009, pp. 47–48).

The recognition of the Piran seabass brand was largely supported by media. As Ms Fonda says: 'When everybody claimed that what we were doing would not work, the first reporter came to visit us. He said that he would like to write our "story." What kind of story, I asked in amazement? Our brand is credible because our story is credible!'

Currently, at least 300 press stores have been published about the company in Slovenian and foreign media. On the company's website, a tab labelled 'Press Room' is available, with a large amount of published material describing the company activities. 'Such a volume of promotion would also be too expensive for our company if we had to finance it,' says Ms Fonda proudly.

In doing so, she draws attention to an article in one of the most internationally renowned journals in the field of aquaculture, *Il Pesce* (The Fish), which was released in October 2012. This article about the company means that they were noticed in the field of aquaculture because of their excellence. Every article adds value to the brand; people who came to visit the company have gained the information from the media.

From these visits, a new benefit was developed for the company, since the initial interest of biologists in visiting the company spread into attendance from various schools, faculties, and pensioner clubs, including people from countries around the world. The visitors were interested in what the company does, how it does it, and how they achieved such high quality. Many people still come from Austria, Italy, and the United Kingdom to visit the company and buy fish. There are also visitors from Australia, Estonia, and Asian countries. Based on the initial enthusiasm for company visits and visitors' proposal, the idea of a new service was developed: guided tourist sightseeing of the fish farm. It turns out that the sightseeing also significantly contributes to the added value of the brand and sales performance (Witell & Löfgren, 2013).

As a result of the economic recession in Slovenia, investments dropped as did investments in underwa-

ter construction work, so this kind of additional service (sightseeing) is very welcome. Moreover, demand for visits is still increasing.

In this way, the search for financial resources from EU funds for fisheries through the Ministry of Agriculture are being diverted to projects which are designed for promotion and tourism. The company is applying to project calls via the Coastal Action Group-Fisherman. These resources have enabled projects, which the company called 'green tours,' and are made with kayaks and a Greenline-hybrid vessel powered by solar energy. This vessel was manufactured by the Seaway Company and selected as the Vessel of the Year in 2012.

Cooperation with other Slovenian enterprises is also vital. High-quality products produced by local Slovenian companies at affordable prices are often indirectly promoted by Fonda based on its own initiative. For example, in the suggested recipe for Fonda's Piran seabass, Piran salt, which is produced in the Sečovelje salt pans, is being promoted (Faganel & Trnavčević, 2012). There are different local products that are natural complements to the consumption of the fish, such as Istrian wine and olive oil. With the mutual participation of entrepreneurs, the promotion of regional products sales is being reinforced.

An important promotional milestone happened when the first restaurant, from Predoslje near Kranj in Gorenjska, introduced Fonda's Piran seabass in their menu. It was the first time that a fish brand appeared on a menu. Ten days later, the restaurant Hiša Franko did the same. Both restaurants are considered to be among the best in Slovenia.

These events had a high value for the company: 'It was the first time that the name of the fish brand was written on the restaurant's menu. Surely this is a great confirmation! And I willingly say that Christopher was the first and then followed by Hiša Franko. I see them as partners, friends, and not just as customers.'

Another important aspect besides product and BM development for new companies is customer development. As Blank (2006) put it, entering new markets is a risky process and there is no guarantee that customers will accept new products (Fonda, 2013a, 2013b), so he proposed a four-step approach to customer develop-

ment with iterations: customer discovery, customer validation, customer creation, learning, and only at the end comes the stage of company building.

Peterson and Fronc (2007) researched the market-driven factors affecting the sustainability of the fish and seafood supply chain and emphasize the importance of connections and collaboration with restaurant chefs, their menu decisions and suppliers, in order to promote the product and increase the awareness of potential new customers (they call it 'fishing for consumers').

Chefs have acted in such a way because they believe in Fonda's product and they also give a positive sign to the general opinion, which nevertheless holds that a wild caught fish is somehow better than the farmed one (Ellingsen et al., 2015; Fonda, 2013a; Kalantzi et al., 2013). Their decision is undoubtedly a great achievement for the Fonda Company while simultaneously contributing to the education of consumers.

Many chefs were already impressed by the quality of the Fonda Piran sea bass, so farmed fish can be even better than the wild ones. Because wild fish are not necessarily fresh, they can have a 'muddy' taste, or they even can be sick. Fonda was also invited to the Slowfish Congress in Genoa, Italy, where they were presented as an example of good practice.

The Fonda.si case study is an example of organizational innovation in which new BMS can represent a form of innovation (Teece, 2010, p. 176). To copy the new achieved advantages, a competitor would have to incur the trouble and expense of copying all elements; manual feeding and maintenance, tagged fish (badge-date of harvest, RFID, QR), zero kilometre food, population education and awareness, farming time and finding suitable locations-franchising, and co-branding and would also have to adopt and manage effective routines for the system handling (Chesbrough, 2007; Kindström & Kowalkowski, 2014; Philipson, 2016, p. 141).

Analysis of the Enterprise's Business Model

Through the analysis of the 'as-is' BM of the Fonda company, two strategic themes were identified: brand Fonda and sustainable aquaculture processes which embrace all the BM's key elements.

The first strategic theme is the company brand Fonda, which represents a very positive attitude towards sustainable aquaculture and care for the environment and the competitive advantage of the company. Sustainable processes that result in 'the best fish in the world' is a strategic directive, which is supported by an effective and successful business with established and new business partners and modern aquaculture co-natural sustainable technology.

This method of fish farming requires not only technical competencies but also a relatively large input of manual work on a farm. Naturally farmed fish and seafood with Fonda's marketing approach opened regional and international distribution channels for the Fonda trademark.

Taylor and Walley (2004) investigated the motives and influences of green entrepreneurs and classified an exploratory typology of ideal types: 'innovative opportunists, visionary champions, ethical mavericks and accidental enviropreneurs.' Fonda has the characteristics of the first three categories.

The second identified strategic theme is co-natural aquaculture processes. In-depth expertise has brought together influential factors of the fish farming process, which enables superior seafood quality. Geographical origin is recognized through the brand Fonda, which maintains the highest European quality standards. The latter also directs the expectations of customers in enjoying healthy seafood (Honkanen & Olsen, 2009; Mai et al., 2010; Trebar et al., 2013).

The developed aquaculture competences of the company certainly have an impact on the growing demand for high-quality, sustainable food, which is an opportunity to achieve higher sales volumes and prices. Demand already exceeds production capacity by at least three times. In addition to the inventive technology of fish and seafood cultivation, an opportunity exists for the company in combining complementary products such as creating new culinary-wine tourism experiences (Witell & Löfgren, 2013) and the enhancement of customer's awareness. Fonda takes advantage of the Slovenian agricultural sector, Mediterranean climate, and the geographical origin of the goods.

The Fondas are aware of their competitive stren-

gths: a long tradition of aquaculture and the regional integration of the company. An important role in the operations of the company advocates the promotion of the Slovenian coastal-Istrian area. Fonda provides an important contribution to the recognition of Slovenian food companies and Slovenia as a touristic destination. With the company's growth (e.g. developing complementary products for different segments of customers or expanding to other countries), keeping the business cohesive and consistent, and motivating managers becomes more difficult. The company should focus first on understanding its BM, how it makes income and how it provides value to customers, and then on changing its BM through further innovation to set it on a new business direction (Abraham, 2013).

The third strategic theme that was identified by analysis of Fonda's desired BM 'to-be' is co-branding. It is well known that the brand Fonda is a relatively fast-growing and recognizable brand, but the success also brings demands for the consolidation and maintenance of acquired market positions. In addition, the company is strategically oriented (embedded) in the local region, which does represent a certain physical limitation.

Österwalder and Pigneur (2010) suggest that BMS must change over time as manufacturing firms are exposed to market turbulence (Teece, 2010; Witell & Löfgren, 2013, p. 522).

Established and recognized brands can be expanded to other areas of interest, but this requires a certain degree of caution (Bocken et al., 2013, pp. 488–489). When considering the use of the 'master brand,' it is a good idea to consider whether this is not detrimental to the core business. Alternatives also are recommended, for example; the use of co-branding with renowned partners of the company and the joint appearance, for the benefit of all the brands (e.g. Pipistrel, salt, rice, wine, vinegar and olive oil producers, new offer of caviar, etc.). The design of a BM usually requires the focal firm to build a boundary-spanning business network with its external stakeholders in order to effectively exploit opportunities and capture value (Shafer, Smith, & Linder, 2005; Guo et al., 2013). Such cooperation of enterprises is at least partially

used, and this is evident from the website of the company in the tab's 'Fonda store.' In this regard, joint appearances, promotions, and common distribution channels of complementary high-quality products are certainly worthwhile as is close cooperation with the tourism sector (Nemec Rudež, Sedmak, Vodeb, & Bojnec, 2014). Therefore, the network has become a key component for BM (Chesbrough, 2007; Shafer et al., 2005; Guo et al., 2013). With the positioning of Slovenia as a tourist destination of excellence, all actors involved from high-quality food producers to tourist service providers will gain much, and Fonda is on the leading edge of the organizations pursuing this idea.

Managers can use BMS and their innovation perspectives to visualize how and when changes might occur, which should increase internal transparency, understanding, and awareness of service opportunities and necessary changes. It is important to understand any potential dependencies among elements; a change in one likely affects the others. Successful change in one element depends on corresponding changes in and the realignment of other elements.

Therefore, the initial step in BM innovation is to determine the current situation (as-is) and identify the target position (to-be), which presents the 'big picture' and supports a discussion of what the BM should look like once the target position is reached. These insights give managers a better understanding of which major changes need to take place, in which elements, and in what sequence (Kindström & Kowalkowski, 2014; Guo et al., 2013).

Sustainability Drivers of the Business Model

The aquaculture developed by the Fonda family does not bring quick benefits because 'the duration of the turnover' is relatively long, which represents a substantial obstacle in obtaining growth financing. As Ms. Fonda states: 'Here is the problem of the banks: when you say that the turnover of the capital is four years, you get only sideways looks. However, on average, with the opening of the first franchise in the Croatian sea, the turnover is shortened.'

Therefore, it would be worth carrying out the activities to look for franchisees in geographic destinations where the fish can be relatively quickly shifted into a

period of maturity, and thus suitability for sale. It is appropriate to examine the factors affecting the shortening of the fish farming time and finding suitable, not very distant locations which can be relatively easily to manage. One example of this is a fish farm in Croatian Osor (Fonda, 2013a, 2013b; Šubic, 2012). According to Pels & Kidd (2015, p. 203–204) this is a revenue model innovation that involves innovating at the company's economic level, e.g. innovating the price strategy and company model innovation, which involves innovating at the company's operational level, e.g. specializing on a specific part of the value chain and outsourcing/franchising the rest.

Fonda cannot compete with large fish farms in the global economies of scale. However, it can compete with boutique quality, and the sustainable co-natural production of farmed fish and seafood (O'Dwyer et al., 2009). The latter may be accompanied by additional services. Irena Fonda states: 'We sell fish as wine! One normal, average fish farm has somewhere around 500 tonnes of fish annually. Break-even figuratively; positive zero is somewhere at 240 tonnes per year and is increasing. Large farms could produce up to 10,000 tonnes per year. So, we are really a boutique.'

This should be developed and diversified as brand positioning for the various, identified target segments of customers. Based on the key differentiating competitive advantages and specific needs and desires, each target segment in which it pays to invest and continue to develop special offers is chosen. Positioning (i.e. the place a product occupies in consumers' minds relative to competing products) is performed by means of product policy, price policy, distribution and unique marketing communications, with added services at the same time, of course. Because the needs of wholesalers, retailers, caterers and groups of individual customers differ, it is necessary to create a unique marketing mix that will focus specifically on each of the target groups. In addition, because of the branded product, grown sustainably, a strategy for consumer development has to be planned and implemented. BM should be able to link two dimensions of company activity, value creation, and value capture. An established business is always tweaking its BM to become more competitive, but when there is a need to radically change

the BM, BM innovation is needed (Baden-Fuller & Haefliger, 2013, p. 419; Philipson, 2016, pp. 133–134; O'Dwyer et al., 2009, pp. 47–48; Guo et al., 2013). A radical change likely includes all elements of the BM; a more incremental change might imply a shorter and more focused change, limited to certain elements (Kindström & Kowalkowski, 2014).

Critical aspects for the company are continued networking development and the further development of complementary activities, i.e. guided visits on the fish farm for the education of young people. From the beginning, free guided visits were gradually transformed into guided visits for a fee according to segmented groups of visitors (Witell & Löfgren, 2013). The company is developing the tourism brand *Ribji vrt Fonda* (Fish Garden Fonda), offering visits to the fish-farm by appointment. To visitors, who mainly come from Asia and EU countries, the Fonda Piran seabass farming is also presented a culinary experience. There are tour groups visiting almost every day. In 2014, Fonda won a Srebrnega sejalka (Silver sower) as one of the most innovative projects in Slovenian tourism. When they were thinking about the ticket price (for the tour and tasting), they decided that it should cost as much as a bag of fish feed costs: 36 euros (Šuligoj, 2016). Nevertheless, the resources of the company to offer this product in the tourism market on a larger scale are limited with concession and company's strategic directions; therefore, this product is not available to mass tourism (Janeš, 2014b; Mihalič, Sedmak, Planinc, & Bogataj 2013, p. 43).

The company has to expand the network of contacts with principals and teachers, especially in the field of geography, household, and nutritional sciences, as well as with students of all levels (Dravinec, 2015). The company's website might be extended to the field of education, for example, an 'Education tab,' with a special portal for distance learning, video clips of events at the fish farm, all of which could give even more credibility to the sustainable operation of the company (Pine & Gilmore, 2016). Education activity is based on the process of guiding and educating customers through transformations such as healthy lifestyle changes (Pine & Gilmore, 2016).

Another challenge is the shortage of the inten-

sive joint appearance of entrepreneurs, coastal-Istrian caterers, and hoteliers. A small company cannot afford advertising space in tourist catalogues and at major trade fairs. Recently, hoteliers have changed their attitudes to Slovenian entrepreneurs and started to place them within their offered services. However, according to Ms Fonda, much more can be done; in particular, opportunities for connecting innovative entrepreneurs with quality products that complement their offered services. The conclusions based on the interview-workshops indicated that interest in the development of activities, i.e. fish farming, culinary, tourism and winery joint promotions and complementary cooperation already exists. The need for a broadly integrated approach increases along the spectrum of strategic innovation for sustainability (Szekely & Strebel, 2013, p. 475).

To promote the food sector at a regional level while addressing prevailing trends towards global markets will require the successful implementation of regional associations, networks and supply chains in which SMEs-producers of farmed seabass and seabream will be associated (Fonda, 2013a; Wagner & Young, 2009).

Continued partnerships with media of all kinds are certainly one of the activities that support the promotion, recognition, and successful product sales. Public relations, publicity, sponsorship, donations, open days, blogs, newsletters, etc. are areas that offer many opportunities.

If the Fonda family should decide to increase the volume of business, this will certainly lead to organizational changes, i.e. division of tasks and responsibilities with respect to markets, key customer groups and continuous product development in the form of the key account managers and business processes that will share tasks and responsibilities based on preferences, attitudes and experiences.

Managerial skills can help the Fonda company to integrate resources within the value network more effectively, create processes to leverage those bundled resources, and bond the company with its stakeholders in novel ways (Guo et al., 2013, p. 452).

With the increased volume of business, the company will also reflect the need to establish a system for measuring the carbon footprint and the introduction

of 'green' technologies of the next generation, i.e. green design (Szekely & Strebel, 2013). Good environmental performance (e.g. manual labour) may directly affect financial performance (e.g. cost reductions with shortening of the fish farming time) or indirectly (e.g. through an improved image) (Bocken et al., 2013, p. 861). Sustainability is an area of increasing interest for the industry and its stakeholders, and companies now aspire to address sustainability issues, such as carbon emissions, at strategic and operational levels (Bocken et al., 2013). The 'to-be' developed BM fulfils Baden-Fuller and Haefliger's (2013, p. 419) innovation criteria and to some degree Porter's (1996) demand for strategy fit.

Fonda applies a holistic approach in which issues of social and financial (e.g. enhancement of customer's awareness, networking, franchises, products of high cuisine) sustainability, health, and education (e.g. guided aquaculture tours and educational activity) underpin the fundamental notion of environmental sustainability (e.g. manual labour, zero kilometre food, Greenline-hybrid vessel). Business partners, key resources, business processes, products and customer segments together support the sustainable BM of Fonda.

Conclusion

BM innovation seems to be a key to delivering future sustainability. The BM canvas assists companies in embedding sustainability into the core of their activities and in improving their understanding of the value proposition in relation to customers and society at large. Sustainability is now a key driver of innovation, and it can be recognized from some good practices that, at each stage, from ensuring compliance through to developing a completely new BM, promote numerous possibilities for innovation. Taking a broad perspective, sustainable innovation can be considered as the development of something new that simultaneously improves performance in all three dimensions of sustainable development (Elkington, 1997; Bocken et al., 2013).

Following the example of Fonda, managers can use the BM canvas to visualize how and when changes in the main business logic occur and what kind of impact

they might have. This should increase internal transparency, understanding, and the awareness of future market opportunities. It also helps in understanding the potential dependencies among different elements of a BM and how they need to be realigned to each other.

The initial step in the process of BM innovation is to determine the current situation (as-is) and identify the target position (to-be), which presents the 'big picture' and supports a discussion of what the BM should look like or what the 'ideal' BM should be, based on the envisioned future scenario.

In this perspective, the case of the company Fonda can be used as an 'ideal' model for the development of a sustainable oriented BM within the aquaculture industry. The ideal model is a disruptive model that changes the way the company creates, transfers and captures value. It is different compared to the way everybody else operates; it can beat almost any technological innovation and overcomes differences in available financial resources.

Fonda also contributes to a triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social benefits. One way of overcoming the last economic crisis is to readjust to a green growth economy, of which Fonda is one of the best practical examples. Possibilities have been discussed to further develop the business, but not exhausted, as there are many other ways to upgrade their products and services. They could also develop recreational fishing around the fish farm, as there are many wild fish feeding under the cages. The Fonda family has an idea to build an artificial reef under the cages, which would help to disintegrate the remains of fish food and waste; it would become highly populated as it would attract different forms of underwater life and it would represent an attraction for divers. Now, when the new ownership has consolidated the financial situation of the company, is time to open the doors to further develop the business and support even more innovative ideas.

Our case study might well also serve for the identification of further research. We would like to recommend some of the areas for the future research, building on the present article as, for example, analysing viable strategies for merging sustainability and fish

farming, in order to develop the growth of the business and help nature and society. It would be possible to study and promote newly identified sustainable business models to some other sectors, for example, hydroponics and other food initiatives and integrating them, as population growth is imminent and the demand for food will increase. Multiple case study research might indicate various possibilities for generalization; they might be beneficial for cross-sectional benchmarking or theory building.

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Visitors' Expectation and Satisfaction with Planica 2015 FIS World Cup Ski Jumping Finals

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Planica is a valley inside Triglav National Park in Slovenia where the best ski jumpers have been to compete on the biggest ski jumping hill in the world meeting every year for more than 40 years. Partly financed by the Fund of the European Union, the Nordic Center Planica has recently been renovated, and the FIS World Cup ski jump finals took place there in 2015 for the first time since its renovation. To understand visitors' satisfaction and future expectation, research with a self-administered questionnaire in which 618 visitors were surveyed has been conducted. Respondents were asked to evaluate their expectations and satisfaction about different elements of the event. The main hypothesis claimed that respondents' expectations about the event affect their satisfaction with it. The hypothesis was tested using regression analysis. The main results confirmed the research hypothesis supporting the fact that visitors' expectations about the major sporting event influence their satisfaction with the it. With the Nordic Center reconstruction, Planica had a second chance to redevelop its image. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the organizer continue to monitor the visitors' expectations and satisfaction levels to be able to offer the optimal service experience.

Keywords: Planica, sporting events, expectation, satisfaction, visitors

Introduction

Planica is a small valley in Slovenia where the best ski jumpers meet every year to compete on the biggest ski jumping hill in the world. The first ski jumping hill was constructed before 1930, and the 'Bloudek Giant' was added in 1934. In 1968, the Slovenian Gorišek brothers constructed the ski jumping hill called 'Letalnica,' where the first ski flying world championships took place in 1972.

Many renovations and reconstructions have taken place in Planica since then, in order to facilitate long

jumps and gain popularity worldwide. However, Planica is not only well known for sport tourism events. Its reputation has suffered from a wealth of unfortunately negative situations and complications, mainly arising from hundreds of landowners in and around the valley.

Although Planica has always been a 'Slovenian identity,' changes were needed to halt the decline in the number of visitors starting in 2005. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia established the Public Institute for Sport Planica in 2009. The institute's vision

and mission are the construction of the Planica Nordic Center based on two phases: first, the Center for Ski Jumps and Ski Flying with €24.3 million of investment; second, the Center for Cross-Country Skiing with €15.3 million of investment (www.nc-planica.si). Both projects are partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union. The first phase was completed as scheduled (31 December, 2014) and a new era for Planica began in 2015, as the newly established center organized its first 'FIS World Cup Ski Jump Finals – Planica 2015.' The organizers also had high expectations for both the number of visitors and the establishment of extreme jumps with record results.

The World Cup Finals organized on a newly renovated Planica ski flying hill between 19 and 22 March 2015 was, as such, the perfect sport event to investigate the opinion of visitors to understand their expectations and satisfaction with the event. Satisfaction of visitors at sporting events is a consequence of perceived value and different elements of quality.

The research problem of this paper is to examine the relationship between expectations and satisfaction of 'FIS World Cup Ski Jump Finals – Planica 2015' visitors. Thus, the purpose of this research is to first understand their expectations and satisfaction in order to follow directions for the future organization and better quality of the sporting event. In addition, the aim was to develop an empirical model derived from the data on visitors' expectations and satisfaction to provide a conceptual understanding of the significant predictors of event attendance at the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jump finals.

Literature Review

Nowadays, organized sport generates events, which can evolve from local to international in attractiveness. If they are planned strategically, these events can become a significant generator and a determining factor in attracting tourist arrivals to destinations (Getz, 2012). Sport events are, therefore, an important component of the tourism industry. They also have the power to 'stimulate the development of the amenities in a place, to promote the place's marketing image, to increase the number of visitors and to reduce

the tourism seasonality' (Gelders & Van Zuilen, 2013; Wäsche, Dickson, & Woll, 2013; Hinch & Higham, 2011; Chalip & McGuirly, 2004). Sport-related major events are becoming an increasingly important motivator of tourism, attracting not only national, regional and local but also global audiences. Major sport events play an important factor for many worldwide destinations (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Getz, 2008). They also greatly contribute to the tourism promotion of a destination, opening new tourism markets and, consequently, attracting new tourists whose main motive is the attendance of a major sporting event (Dimanche, 2003). In addition to being significant tourism generators and promotional tools, sporting events are also one of the most widely studied areas of sports tourism (Getz & Page, 2015) and represent the largest component of the event tourism sector.

For Slovenia and its residents, the FIS World Cup Ski Jumping Finals in Planica is more than just one of the regular yearly events, but is, as described by Kreft (2010, p. 17) more of a 'national sport.' This is not because of the number of jumpers who come to compete in the event but because the nation has identified itself with this sport and their competitions for more than 80 years, including Planica flying, which represents a massive, annual festival of national identity, featuring a continuous ambition to break records. High attendance sporting events attract sponsor revenue and thus an empirical understanding of the factors that influence sports attendance is essential to the long-term viability of these events (Hall, O'Mahony, & Vieceli, 2010). After its renovation, the Nordic Center Planica started a new era with high hopes and expectations for the future, which needs special attention from the organizers in understanding the visitor's needs. It is certain that sporting events would not be the same without the sport visitors who are ready to pay high prices for tickets experience emotions of highly memorable sport events (Emery, Kerr, & Crabtree, 2013).

Currently, visitor satisfaction with the organization of sporting events correlates with numerous positive business and social outcomes. Therefore, sport event organizers recognize a vital goal in satisfying their customers. To be able to satisfy the sport visitors at various events, the organizers need to know their

expectations. Sport visitors' satisfaction experience in association with a sporting event is based on the 'comparison of their perceptions on predictive expectations for the event service experience and perceptions of what actual service experience is consumed' (Kelley & Turley, 2001). Gnoth (1997) suggested that tourist expectation is constructed by their needs and motivations. Furthermore 'specific expectations are tentative representations of future events and can both refer to a specific situation and an unknown or abstract situation' (Gnoth, 1997, p. 298). Expectations depend on the individual's personal traits and desires (Shahin, Jamkhaneh, & Cheryani, 2014). Additionally, Higham and Hinch (2002) discovered that expectations and desired outcomes are the functions of many factors including individual identity, attitude, and personality. For Forinash (2003), the expectation is 'an assumption of the inevitable' and the affirmation that the desired outcome will occur.

Satisfaction, in contrast, is a response to expectations. Oliver (2010, p. 8) defines satisfaction as 'the consumer fulfillment response with a judgment that the product/service feature or the product or service itself provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment including levels of under- or over-fulfillment.' Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) investigated the aspect of service quality in the sport tourism industry and explain satisfaction as the comparison between expectations and perceptions of service quality on the part of the consumer. Satisfaction could also be understood as a 'pleasurable reaction to a good or service in an act of consumption' (Oliver, 2010, p. 8). Yoshida and James (2010, p. 340) explain that 'customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's pleasurable, fulfillment response to the entertainment of sport competition and/or ancillary services provided during a game and the service satisfaction is a customer's overall satisfaction with the services experienced at a sporting event.' The outcome dimension of service quality measured by player performance, opponent characteristics and game atmosphere (Yoshida & James, 2010) is what the sport event visitors receive in the process of the competition. According to Gronroos (1984) the facility in the stadium, the supporting service, the design, the accessibility,

the security, the space/functions, and interaction between employees are all elements of functional quality that are somehow related to the service quality. The satisfaction of the sport visitors additionally presents a crucial point for sport event organizers since it has consequences on the service quality, which are a manageable factor of the future organization of the sporting event. The satisfaction of the sport event visitors is not solely dependent on the achievements of professional athletes.

The sport event organizers and sport event visitors each bear significant responsibility in the total satisfaction of the sporting event. The sport event organizers have the ongoing task to produce friendly and smooth services to the sport event visitors and treat them as individual customers with unique needs. Sport event visitors themselves also play a major role in ensuring complete satisfaction for other visitors. This may be achieved by choosing to engage in conversation with other visitors and giving their personal opinions on the sporting event. When the sport event visitors are cheering, clapping, and singing, this can also contribute to uplifting the social environment (Cant & Wiid, 2012).

Sport event visitors' satisfaction is high only when the sport event organizers have ensured that the visitors have received a 'value-for-the-money' experience. Moreover, the service experience is also connected to the 'servicescape' which explains the physical surroundings to facilitate the service offering to consumers (Cant & Wiid, 2012). The 'servicescape' of sport events organization includes the importance of tangible elements, such as the event area infrastructure, and intangible elements, such as the temperature or the sound, that might influence the overall service experience (Hoffman & Turley, 2002). Bitner (1992) discovered that a 'servicescape' has three basic dimensions: (1) ambient conditions, (2) spatial layout and functionality and (3) signs, symbols, and artifacts (Cant & Wiid, 2012). Ambient conditions of a sport event affect perceptions of visitor's responses to the sport event environment. Generally, they affect the five senses, such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent. The dimension connected to spatial layout and functionality refers to the ways in which seats, aisles,

food service lines, security, toilets, entrances, and exits are designed and arranged in the sport event area. The aspect of aesthetic appeal is connected to factors such as the surrounding environment, cleanliness, signage, and other elements. Based on the perception of these dimensions of factors, sport event visitors will have set thoughts and feelings that lead them to either approach or avoid the sporting event (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994; Cant & Wiid, 2012). Additionally, sport event visitors need to feel safe in the sporting environment to fully enjoy the event. The safe atmosphere dimension relates to safety issues inside and around the sport event area (Westerbeek & Shilbury, 2003). The sport event organizers nowadays need to pay particular attention to the safety and security of sport event visitors due to many terrorist attacks and violence situations around sporting events infrastructure where masses of people gather to enjoy different sporting events.

We can conclude that there are various factors influencing sport event visitors' satisfaction that need to be investigated. All those factors play a major role in constructing the visitors' satisfaction with the event and potential revisiting of organized sport events. Based on the literature review, not much research directly connected particularly on sport event visitors has been conducted (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Two of the most critical studies of sport visitors' satisfaction are those by Madrigal (1995) who tested the affective determinants of fan satisfaction with a sport event and Wakefield and Blodgett (1994, 1996) with the examination of the effects of quality perceptions of the sport facility on customer satisfaction and re-patronage intentions. In the literature review of sport event service quality, two perspectives of research in which researchers analyze the perceptions of sport event visitors can be found. Some studies (McDonald, Sutton, & Milne, 1995; Theodorakis, Kambitsis, & Laios, 2001) have adopted the measurement model based on the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithmal, & Berry, 1988) but others developed specific measurement scales for analyzing the perceptions and satisfaction of sport event visitors (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2013; Ko, Zhang, Cattani, & Pastore 2011).

Table 1 Gender and Country of Residence of Respondents

Category		<i>f</i>	<i>f</i> %
Gender	Male	341	55.4
	Female	274	44.6
Country of residence	Norway	67	10.9
	Poland	74	12.1
	Germany	5	0.8
	Czech Republic	1	0.2
	England	1	0.2
	Austria	8	1.3
	Bosnia and Herz.	1	0.2
	Croatia	2	0.3
	Canada	2	0.3
	Slovenia	453	73.8

Research Methodology

For data collection of this study, a face-to-face questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was developed using the findings from the literature review suggesting that the quality of service (Gronross, 1984; Yoshida & James, 2010) is an important aspect of a sporting event, and that it should be taken into consideration by organizers and researchers to evaluate the sporting event. Visitors' satisfaction has a major role in determining service quality. Satisfaction with the event was measured according to the elements that Bitner (1992) pointed out as being crucial in measuring the satisfaction of sporting event visitors.

Visitors to the FIS World Cup ski jumping finals 2015 were the target population. The event was held between the 20th and 22nd of March 2015 in Planica, Slovenia. The face-to-face interviews were conducted at the event by specially instructed interviewers in order to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of different sections: demographic characteristics, prior travel organization to attend the event, motives for attending the event, the influence of promotion of the event, expectations, and satisfaction with the event. The final database consists of 618 valid units.

According to the theoretical background, we have formulated the following research hypothesis: 'Visitors expectations about the Planica 2015 event influence their satisfaction with the event.'

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Expectations about the Event

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
The atmosphere at event	554	4.66	0.715	-2.345	0.104	5.657	0.207	0.153433
Time with friends/relatives	553	4.58	0.873	-2.433	0.104	5.954	0.207	0.190611
The excitement of the event	551	4.35	0.987	-1.545	0.104	1.771	0.208	0.226897
Weather on the day of the event	553	4.29	1.046	-1.509	0.104	1.636	0.207	0.243823
The security at event	550	4.05	1.072	-1.119	0.104	0.644	0.208	0.264691
Care for the environment	554	3.86	1.103	-0.793	0.104	-0.034	0.207	0.285751
Information on the big screen	551	3.78	1.228	-0.789	0.104	-0.317	0.208	0.324868
The sanitary conditions (wc)	549	3.77	1.149	-0.665	0.104	-0.396	0.208	0.304775
Big screen	550	3.75	1.183	-0.678	0.104	-0.415	0.208	0.315467
Food & Drink	550	3.71	1.141	-0.617	0.104	-0.314	0.208	0.307547
Entertainment at the event	546	3.69	1.117	-0.613	0.104	-0.249	0.209	0.302710
Culture of the event	551	3.67	1.175	-0.714	0.104	-0.203	0.208	0.320163
Speaker at event	550	3.57	1.281	-0.533	0.104	-0.814	0.208	0.358824
Music at event	554	3.55	1.178	-0.423	0.104	-0.716	0.207	0.331831
No crowd/queue at the event	550	3.46	1.249	-0.463	0.104	-0.666	0.208	0.360983
Warm tents	547	3.17	1.323	-0.176	0.104	-1.062	0.209	0.417350
Famous people at the event	549	2.91	1.514	0.031	0.104	-1.445	0.208	0.520275
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	552	2.77	1.378	0.220	0.104	-1.146	0.208	0.497473

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of responses, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) skewness – statistics, (5) skewness – standard error, (6) kurtosis – statistics, (7) kurtosis – standard error, (8) coefficient of variation. Valid *N* (listwise) = 528.

Statistical analyses used for the purpose of this research are as follows: frequencies, descriptive statistics, and distribution of the variables, and linear regression.

First, we present the sample. Table 1 presents the gender and nationality of respondents. There were 55.4% male and 44.6% female respondents in our survey.

Most of the respondents came from Slovenia (73.8%); 12.1% of respondents came from Poland, 10.9% from Norway, 1.3% from Austria, 0.8% from Germany, 0.3% from Croatia and Canada each, while 0.2% of respondents were from the Czech Republic, England, and Bosnia and Herzegovina each.

The average age of respondents was 32.33 years. The youngest respondent was 12 years old, while the oldest was 79 years old.

Expectations about the Event

We asked respondents about their expectations for the event: "To which degree are the following expectations

about Planica 2015 important for you?" Respondents were asked to mark the importance of the following factors using a 5-point Likert-type scale ('1' meaning very unimportant, '5' meaning very important): Care for the environment, Music at event, Speaker at event, The security at event, The atmosphere at event, Time with friends/relatives, The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs, Culture of the event, Entertainment at the event, No crowd/queue at the event, Weather on the day of the event, Food & Drink, Big screen, Information on the big screen, The sanitary conditions (wc), Warm tents, Famous people at the event, and The excitement of the event.

In Table 2, the results of the descriptive statistics are presented. The most important factor was the expectation about the atmosphere at the event. The average was 4.66 showing that this was a very important expectation for respondents. We can see that expectations about spending time with friends and relatives were also very important (average 4.58).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction with the Event

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
The atmosphere at event	520	4.64	0.663	-2.023	0.107	4.592	0.214	0.14288793
Time with friends/relatives	521	4.61	0.813	-2.505	0.107	6.565	0.214	0.17635575
The excitement of the event	518	4.37	0.972	-1.584	0.107	1.892	0.214	0.22242563
Weather on the day of the event	516	4.34	1.022	-1.612	0.108	1.896	0.215	0.23548387
The security at event	522	4.12	0.980	-1.025	0.107	0.632	0.213	0.23786408
Food & Drink	515	3.96	0.997	-0.612	0.108	-0.371	0.215	0.25176768
Culture of the event	519	3.91	1.061	-0.810	0.107	0.077	0.214	0.27135550
Care for the environment	523	3.90	0.989	-0.711	0.107	0.071	0.213	0.25358974
Big screen	517	3.88	1.127	-0.790	0.107	-0.137	0.214	0.29046392
Entertainment at the event	513	3.85	1.010	-0.601	0.108	-0.103	0.215	0.26233766
Speaker at event	518	3.85	1.088	-0.577	0.107	-0.518	0.214	0.28259740
Information on the big screen	516	3.82	1.188	-0.837	0.108	-0.116	0.215	0.31099476
Music at event	518	3.73	1.095	-0.554	0.107	-0.390	0.214	0.29356568
No crowd/queue at the event	515	3.63	1.172	-0.525	0.108	-0.468	0.215	0.32286501
The sanitary conditions (wc)	515	3.59	1.072	-0.355	0.108	-0.475	0.215	0.29860724
Warm tents	511	3.35	1.196	-0.341	0.108	-0.660	0.216	0.35701493
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	516	3.33	1.293	-0.309	0.108	-0.882	0.215	0.38828829
Famous people at the event	512	3.14	1.363	-0.151	0.108	-1.135	0.215	0.43407643

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of responses, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) skewness – statistics, (5) skewness – standard error, (6) kurtosis – statistics, (7) kurtosis – standard error, (8) coefficient of variation. Valid *N* (listwise) = 492.

Expectations that were important (but not very important) for respondents included the excitement of the event (average 4.35), the weather on the day of the event (4.29), the security at the event (4.05), care for the environment (3.86), information on the big screen (3.78), the sanitary conditions (3.77), big screen (3.75), food and drink (3.71), entertainment at the event (3.69), culture of the event (3.67), the speaker at the event (3.57), and the music at the event (3.55).

The following expectations were considered as neither important neither nor important by respondents were no crowd at the event (average being 3.46), warm tents (3.17), famous people at the event (2.91) and the possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs (2.77).

The coefficient of variation (CV) is lower than 1 for all indicators, suggesting a good model fit ('FAQ: What is the Coefficient of Variation?' 2007).

Skewness and kurtosis showed a distribution close to the normal one for almost all the factors of expectations about the event, except for the atmosphere at

the event and spending time with relatives and friends where both coefficients were too high (above |2|) and showing a distribution being not normal. In this case, we decided to omit these two factors of expectations about the event from further statistical analysis.

Satisfaction with the Event

In the following, we asked the respondents the next question: 'To which degree are you satisfied with the following factors about Planica 2015.' Respondents were asked to report their satisfaction using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 meaning not satisfied at all, 5 meaning completely satisfied) for the following factors: Care for the environment, Music at event, Speaker at event, The security at event, The atmosphere at event, Time with friends/relatives, The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs, Culture of the event, Entertainment at the event, No crowd/queue at the event, Weather on the day of the event, Food & Drink, Big screen, Information on the big screen, The sanitary conditions

Table 4 Regression Coefficients among (Pairs of Indicators) Expectations and Satisfaction at the Event

Indicator	R^2	F		β	
		(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Care for the environment	0.253	173.833	0.000	0.503	0.000
Music at event	0.244	164.250	0.000	0.494	0.000
Speaker at event	0.284	201.702	0.000	0.533	0.000
The security at event	0.220	143.683	0.000	0.469	0.000
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	0.275	191.800	0.000	0.524	0.000
Culture of the event	0.246	166.009	0.000	0.496	0.000
Entertainment at the event	0.281	196.154	0.000	0.530	0.000
No crowd/queue at the event	0.132	76.500	0.000	0.363	0.000
Weather on the day of the event	0.109	62.123	0.000	0.330	0.000
Food & Drink	0.189	117.516	0.000	0.435	0.000
Big screen	0.316	233.172	0.000	0.562	0.000
Information on the big screen	0.322	240.493	0.000	0.568	0.000
The sanitary conditions (wc)	0.129	74.432	0.000	0.359	0.000
Warm tents	0.232	150.993	0.000	0.481	0.000
Famous people at the event	0.301	216.833	0.000	0.549	0.000
The excitement of the event	0.379	309.458	0.000	0.615	0.000

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) statistics, (2) significance.

(wc), Warm tents, Famous people at the event and The excitement of the event. The descriptive statistics can be found in Table 3.

Respondents reported being very satisfied with two factors, the atmosphere at the event (average 4.64) and spending time with friends and relatives (4.61). Respondents were satisfied (but not very satisfied) on average with the following factors: the excitement at the event (average 4.37), the weather on the day of the event (4.34), the security at the event (4.12), food and drink offer (3.96), the culture of the event (3.91), care for the environment (3.91), big screen (3.88), entertainment at the event (3.85), speaker at the event (3.85), information on the big screen (3.82), the music at the event (3.73), no crowd at the event (3.63), and the sanitary conditions (3.59).

Respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied on average with the following: warm tents (3.35), the possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs (3.33) and the presence of famous people at the event (3.14).

The coefficient of variation (cv) is lower than 1 for all indicators suggesting a good model fit ('FAQ: What

is the Coefficient of Variation?' 2007). Skewness and kurtosis showed a distribution close to the normal one for almost all the factors of satisfaction with the event, except for the atmosphere at the event and spending time with relatives and friends where both coefficients were too high (above |2|) and showing a not normal distribution. In this case, we decided to omit these two factors of satisfaction with the event from further statistical analysis.

Research Findings

The research hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis (ENTER method), comparing the expectation and satisfaction with the same factor about the Planica 2015 event. The results are presented in Table 4. The coefficients that are statistically significant at the 0.05 level are marked in bold.

From Table 4 (R square), it can be seen that between 10.9% and 37.9% of the total variance can be explained by regression models when considering the influence of the expectations on the satisfaction with the Planica 2015 event. All the regression models are sta-

tistically significant at the 0.01 level. We can conclude the regression models are appropriate.

All the Beta coefficients among the pairs of the same factors show statistically significant correlations at the 0.01 level of expectations and satisfaction about the Planica 2015 event. Thus, we can accept our research hypothesis that expectations about the event influence the satisfaction with it. Respondents who had higher expectations about the event were more satisfied with it in comparison to respondents who had lower expectations about it.

Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of the study was to understand how the expectations of visitors attending a sport event influence their satisfaction with it. To test the research hypothesis, a questionnaire was constructed, and face-to-face interviews were completed during the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals in Slovenia. The results revealed that the visitors to the event had very high expectations regarding the atmosphere at the event and the time spent with their family and friends. The same two factors came in the first two places while asking about their satisfaction with the event. An assumption of the theory of the service quality in connection with expectations and satisfaction is that providing high-quality goods/services will enable organizers of major sport events to satisfy sport event visitors and to survive in a competitive market of other similar events (Dobholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz, 2000). The results of the survey confirmed the reviewed literature findings, suggesting there is a connection between the expectations and the satisfaction of visitors at the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals. Since the service quality of the major sporting event is an indirect measure of the connection between the expectations and the satisfaction with the event, we can conclude that the organization of the event was of high quality, as perceived by the visitors.

The research hypothesis was tested using the linear regression analysis. The relationship between several (16) different aspects (service quality) of expectations and satisfaction were analysed. There were 16 different linear regression analyses used, each one checking for the influence of an expectation to the same as-

pect of satisfaction. The results of the regression analyses confirmed the main research hypothesis, showing there is a strong, statistically significant, influence of visitors' expectations on their satisfaction with the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup. Thus, it can be seen that visitors with higher expectations about the event were more satisfied with the event in comparison to those who had lower expectations about it. Since visitors were very satisfied with the event, they will come with even higher expectations of it in the coming season(s). Thus, it is crucial for the organizers to focus on researching the expectations and satisfaction with the event to be able to prevent lowering the expectations and the satisfaction with it in the future.

The contribution of the study is that the research of the expectation and satisfaction of the major sporting events needs to be interdisciplinary and including both the factors of atmosphere of the major sporting event with various background characteristics (noise, scent, sound, crowd, lighting and music) and the service quality of the components of the major sporting event such as security, food & drinks, sanitary conditions, stadium characteristics, speakers, official souvenirs, etc. Therefore, major sport event organizers have to produce friendly and smooth services to achieve great atmosphere to satisfy the visitors with unique individual needs. In future research, the relationships between the atmosphere of the major sporting event, supplementary services, and also other activities (entertainment) should be examined (Yoshida & James, 2010).

The goal of major sport event organizers is also to attract as many visitors as they can so as to cover their expenses that arose during the organization and promotion of the event. Every organizer of a major sporting event is interested in acquiring a certain level of service quality that will lead to satisfied visitors. If the major sporting event is a part of a series of events that happens every year or several times per year at the same destination, then the organizers like to focus even more on the satisfaction of visitors since this will lead to a greater percentage of repeat visitors. If the promotion of the destination is done simultaneously with the promotion of the event, the organizers will not have just obtained higher revenue from visi-

tors, but they will promote the destination itself, leading to visitors who will come back to the destination as tourists.

Any visitor that comes to a major sporting event is full of expectations about it. Those expectations arise from the promotion of the event, the experience that he/she already had when attending similar events, the experience he/she was told about by friends or relatives, and other factors. From previous research (Jin et al., 2013; Ko et al., 2011), it can be found that the experiences of the visitors of sporting events influence their satisfaction with it. Thus, it is paramount that the organizers of the events be able to research the expectations and the satisfaction of the visitors. The current study offers an attempt to measure visitor expectation and satisfaction at the specific major sporting event of the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals. The results will be a good start for better quality service of the organization of future events in Planica.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations may have influenced the study's results. The limitations of the survey are mainly connected to the data collection. The greatest concern is the fact that there is no full database containing the sample frame with their contacts. Visitors to a sporting event do not need to register themselves, or they can buy tickets for a group of people leading to the first limitation: it is difficult to prepare a sampling procedure that will enable probability sampling that leads to the representativeness of the data. The second limitation of data collection during the sporting events comes from the fact that visitors come to see the competition; thus they are focused on the event itself and do not want to be disturbed by interviewers asking them questions about the event. The third limitation is because visitors tend to report higher satisfaction because they are still under the influence of the ambiance and the atmosphere of the event. The fourth limitation is caused by the fact that if we ask visitors opinions during the event, it is not over yet, so there are things happening that could affect their opinions.

Suggestions for future research include reconsideration of data-collecting techniques for the purpose of

researching the expectation and satisfaction of the major sporting events.

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Influence of the Centralization of Public Services on the Crisis of Tourist Services

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For the previous eight years, there have been trends in Slovenia to centralize state institutions in bigger towns, as opposed to smaller ones. State institutions are typically placed in bigger urban environments. One part of this environment is the Municipality of Brežice, which is ranked among the top four among Slovenian municipalities offering overnight stays and is seen as a critical administrative and employment centre in its region. The tourist service market in urban environments also depends on local consumers and civil servants that use these services in and outside the tourist season. The purpose of the research is to determine the dependence of tourist service providers on local consumers and civil servants. The tourist sector is often subjected to seasonal variations that cause significant risks for tourist providers. In this research, we are attempting to determine to what extent the use of services by civil servants allows tourist service providers to survive throughout the year, in particular during the off-season. The results of the research show that the centralization of public services affects the change of location of service use, which is significantly connected with the workplace location. The data collected show that civil servants' service use throughout the year enables the survival of tourist service providers outside the tourist season. The centralization of public services can consequently cause a crisis of tourist services in the urban environment since the locals and those employed in urban centres provide constant, even non-seasonal, demand and enable providers to survive throughout the whole year.

Keywords: centralization, civil servant, Municipality of Brežice, tourism and travel-related services

Introduction: Centralization of Decentralized Public Services

For the previous eight years, there have been trends in Slovenia to centralize state institutions in bigger towns, as opposed to smaller ones. In regards to territory, Slovenia has introduced double decentralization. In other words, in addition to local authorities, there are also state authorities in one unit, meaning that cen-

tralized matters are dealt with by one type of authority, whereas decentralized matters by others in the same unit. Slovenia is divided into 212 municipalities and 58 administrative units, which are regulated by statutory functions or management competences as part of administrative decentralization. There are also different branch offices of the civil service (tax administration, surveying and mapping authority, inspections,

defence branch office). The Slovenian public administration is rather decentralized, which is particularly the case for local as well as state authorities (Ferfila, Brezovšek, & Grizold, 2011).

Pusić (Ferfila et al., 2011) defines decentralization as each attenuation of a certain centre of influence of one organized system on its parts.

Andrews, Boyne, Law, and Walker (2009) say that the level of centralized or decentralized decision-making is a key factor in the organization when distributing means and imposing guidelines and goals. A highly decentralized level of decision-making and implementation of public functions is usually a sign of system democracy, which provides political and administrative proximity for its citizens.

In contrast, it has been possible, since 2009, to follow proposals of the government that advocate the rationalization of the civil service via different working groups of ministries:

1. The document 'Rationalization of maternity hospital network in Slovenia,' dated 23 September 2009, suggests the integration of smaller maternity hospitals and the structural adjustment of subject matters in other maternity hospitals due to the basic rationalization of staff capacity and use of equipment (Meden-Vrtovec et al., 2009).
2. Since 1 June 2011, a new organizational structure of the police on the regional level has been active as Project Libra. The purpose of the police reorganization on the regional level is to join the least burdened (concerning the scope of work, quantity, types of objective safety phenomena) police directorates with the bigger ones. The number of the police directorates in the Republic of Slovenia has been reduced to eight (from 11). The common number of systematized workplaces in Police has been reduced by 57: 54 in administrative units and three in operating units. The Police Directorates that have been abolished are those in Krško, Slovenj Gradec, and Postojna (Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, 2011).
3. Advance-noticed tax reorganization in 2013 when the Government of the RS wanted to join tax and customs administrations in order to also reduce

indirectly the number of local tax administrations. On the basis of information in the daily newspaper Delo, seven out of 15 administrations should be abolished at the Ministry of Finance (Božič, 2013).

Public opinion constantly opposes the previously mentioned reorganizations, saying that higher centralization strengthens bigger centres. Local communities blame the ruling class that (aside from the regionalization law) weaken individual regions, impoverish their long-term employment potentials, create an additional outflow of personnel, and weaken the position of economic activities. For the local environment, these branch offices of state and public administrations are significant employers that (via secure employment in the public sector) increase the level of quality of life in the community as well as attracting organizations with other complementary market services.

Tourist Service

Today, one clear global trend is the extensive growth of services and products with little or no physical content. In most developed countries, services represent the majority of gross domestic product. However, the service economy is not limited solely to developed countries. In developing countries, for example, most of the non-agricultural working force is employed in catering or the travel industry, which are part of the growing service sector (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2014).

The service-oriented economy has replaced the product-oriented economy in which human relations among market participants are more important than the products themselves. Consequently, we can talk about a new economic revolution or service revolution (Potočnik, 2004).

Nowadays, as the largest service sector in the world, tourism includes two main industries: catering and the travel industry. Catering success depends on the travel industry in general. Organizers select destinations according to travel costs to the destination, hotel prices and restaurant quality, evening activities for tourists, etc. (Kotler et al., 2014).

Tourism, like civil service, is a significant employer, but it also has a recreational effect which is of great

value for employees and other inhabitants. It is about the physical and mental shape and mood that create a positive atmosphere and give feedback results seen in increased productivity. Workers employed in tourism have taken upon themselves a large part of the moral and material responsibility to protect the environment (Andrejčič et al., 1997) and, as such, make an additional contribution to the quality of life in their environment.

Andrejčič et al. (1997) define tourist service as part of a tourism organization in satisfying tourists' needs or realizing tourist promotions. These services are carried out by restaurant facilities, hotels, camp grounds, local households, mountaineering and holiday lodges, cultural institutions, sports teams, banks, urban facilities, insurance funds, crafts workshops, state authorities, tourist guides, and other citizens with their kindness, respect, and help.

The link between service sector development and quality of life is strong and positive. Approximately 90% of all new employment positions are in service activities. When creating service activities, the following elements play an important part: the role of women, art, standard rate of education, and inhabitants' habits. Moreover, tourism has extreme growth in international exchange, and is also the only branch that shows constant and stable growth despite the recession (Andrejčič et al., 1997).

According to statistical data (Eurostat, 2015) tourism has a crucial role in the European Union due to its economic and working potential as well as its social and environmental consequences. In 2012, one of ten companies in European non-financial economic sectors belonged to the tourist industry. In the same year, the tourist sector had 2.2 million companies, which employed 12 million people.

Companies involved in branches connected with tourism employed 9% of all employees in the economy as a whole and 21.9% of people working in the service sector (Eurostat, 2015).

The economic value of international tourism can be measured by examining the ratio of international travel benefits with regard to GDP. In 2014, the ratio of tourist benefits in GDP was the highest among EU members in Croatia (17.2%), Malta (14.4%), and

Cyprus (12.3%). This is an indicator that tourism is essential in these countries. However, in absolute terms, the highest income inside EU in international tourist sector was seen in Spain, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany (Eurostat, 2015).

In recent years, Slovenia has made its mark in tourism. In 2015, based on Slovenian Tourist Board data (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2016), tourism employed 13.0% of all employees and generated 8% of the total amount of Slovenian exports, contributing 13% to GDP. For the first time, over 10 million overnight stays of tourists were recorded, of which over 6 million were in hotels. Foreign tourists generated 12.3% more revenue and 8.6% of overnight stays of tourists than in 2014. Growth was also recorded in overnight stays of domestic tourists, namely by 6.5%. Regarding overnight stays by type of municipality, those with spa facilities were again predominant. The number of overnight stays in these municipalities increased by 1.2%. At the most popular tourist accommodation, i.e. hotels, 6.2 million guests stayed overnight, which is the highest number to date, and it increased by 5.6% compared to 2014. Unlike 2014, the number of overnight stays of tourists in camps also increased (+10.3%). At an export rate of 40%, it is the biggest exporter of services and provides 13% of all workplaces (103,500), directly and indirectly connected with tourism. According to Bank of Slovenia information, the value of travel exports reached €2.2 billion in 2015, which is the highest score achieved so far in Slovenia. In addition to the absolute record in the field of travel exports with 8.8% growth compared to 2014, the Bank of Slovenia recorded another record in the relative terms in the last seven years. In 2015, the export of travels increased by 22% compared to the excellent year of 2008 (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2016a).

Tourist services are an important pillar of the economy in Brežice. In 2015, there were 631,241 overnight stays in the municipality, which ranks Brežice, according to the analysis of tourism turnover, in the fourth position among 25 municipalities with more than 100,000 overnight stays in the 2012–2015 period (Milič, Sedej, & Javornik, 2016).

The number of overnight stays in 2015 meant €453,232 of budget funds for the municipality of Brežice

from the tourist tax. The town of Brežice is also a significant regional administrative centre. One of the most critical sectors is the service one that, according to Bole (2008), combines tertiary and quaternary sectors. It can also be called the fifth sector, including top management in the private sector and society, mainly covering the areas of public administration, science, health, culture, and media (Bole, 2008).

Next to Postojna, Dravograd, and Tolmin, the town of Brežice can be counted among those with a prominent orientation towards public services. These are the towns that had been planned as administrative centres (Bole, 2008).

The purpose of the research is to determine the dependence of tourist service providers on local consumers and civil servants. The tourist sector is often subjected to seasonal variations that cause significant risks for tourist providers. Great seasonalization is typical also for Brežice as a destination, where three summer months, with a peak in August, are in the forefront concerning arrivals and overnight stays. From the data obtained from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, a three-fold difference in crowds of tourists is evident between the strongest and weakest tourist months of the year (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2016). At the peak of the tourist season in August, arrivals range between 20,000 and 28,000, whereas in March, in recent years, there are approximately 10,000 to 11,000 tourist arrivals. In relation to this information, differences are also evident in incomes. Based on information about tourist tax collected it can be evaluated that incomes in the peak season and in off-peak months differ three-fold or even more (data are obtained from the municipal administration and are available from the authors). This shows that tourist service providers during the off-season face decreased demand and sales. In addition, the local inhabitants, civil servants who commute to Brežice from other municipalities, also represent a critical off-peak demand. In this research, we are attempting to determine to what extent the use of services by civil servants enables tourist service providers to survive throughout the year during the off-season. Consequently, the presence of a constant, large number of daily service consumers encourages a growing supply

that is simultaneously available to visitors and tourists. The town itself is promoted and attractive for guests; competitiveness and service quality are stimulated. The research is intended to determine the influence of presence/absence of civil servants on the use of services or economy in the Municipality of Brežice.

The objective of the research is to find out whether the centralization of public services has an influence on the changed location of service use and consequently on a tourism crisis in an urban environment. The goal is to affect (with the research results) decision makers concerning the further centralization of public services.

Van Leeuwen and Rietveld (2001) studied consumers' behaviour in smaller and medium-sized towns. The results show that towns remain important centres of purchase: 60–80% of town dwellers and 40–60% of inhabitants from the outskirts make product and service purchase in towns. They also discovered a strong bond in the effect of workplace location on place of purchase.

Another important article for our research, in order to compare empirical data, is by Reynolds and Darden (1972). They published a psychological study of consumers that make purchases outside their place of residence. The results of 304 subjects involved in the study show that a person who makes purchases outside his/her town of residence is, compared to the one who does this very rarely, more educated, has a better salary, is middle-aged, likes shopping in the evening, is not loyal to any specific stores and shows urban-orientation.

Employment Structure of the Inhabitants of Brežice: Purpose of Public Services

Following the example of the Municipality of Brežice, we will show the importance of public services for the local environment. On the basis of information from the Employment Service of Slovenia (Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje, 2016), there were 21,854 economically active inhabitants in November 2015 in the area of the Regional Unit Sevnica (administrative units Brežice, Krško, Sevnica): in other words, 462 people or 2.1% fewer than in November 2014 (in Slovenia 0.6% increase). In the January–November 2015 period,

there were on average 21,900 people in work or 0.9% fewer than a year before (in Slovenia 0.9% increase). In November 2015, the level of registered unemployment was 13.0% (in Slovenia 11.7%).

On the basis of information from the Employment Service of Slovenia (Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje, 2016) concerning the active working population in the public and private sectors in the selected municipalities (taking into account the workplace on March 31, 2016), the town of Brežice takes the first position according to the number employed in the public sector. The Municipality of Brežice was compared to municipalities with a similar number of inhabitants. In that municipality, 33% (2208 civil servants) of the active working population is employed in the public sector. Two other municipalities that can be compared to Brežice according to the number of employed in the public sector are Krško and Jesenice.

A total of 2208 civil servants are employed in local and state institutions with their offices located in Brežice. Most services are concentrated in the old town centre in Brežice, which is treated as a cultural monument area. The old town centre is a cultural as well as a tourist point of interest, which attracts numerous tourists because of the castle there. The supply of tourist services, which also depends on local consumers and civil servants, who use services in and out of the tourist season, is adjusted to tourist demand. Public local and state institutions contribute to the exterior of the town, whereas civil servants represent constant (non-seasonal) demand for services, which in turn creates a higher bid which is at the same time also available to visitors and tourists during the tourist season.

Method of Research

Since we know that economic activities are necessary for the provision of public goods, needed for the life and development of individuals, we wanted to answer the following question – *Does the centralization of public services affect the change of location of service use and consequently on the crisis of tourist services in urban environments?*

The research question was tested on the example of the Municipality of Brežice, which is, as previously

presented, an appropriate area to study the use and dependence of tourist services on local consumers and civil servants, because it is a regional administrative centre, whereas its economy is based on service activities (tourism, trade). On the basis of that fundamental question, three hypotheses have been tested:

- H1 *The centralization of public services in Brežice changes the location of service use.*
- H2 *The change of location of service use consequently causes a crisis of tourist services in urban environment.*
- H3 *The centralization of public services in Brežice has a negative impact on tourism development, which is economically significant in Brežice.*

On the basis of the relevance of the information gathered, we used qualitative (semi-structured in-depth interview) and quantitative (questionnaire analysis) research in the empirical part. The centre of the research is the implementation and discussion of quantitative research (data collection with questionnaire). The research was based on the use of descriptive and analytical approach, quantitative nature, and qualitative nature with the research method of in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The data were processed using the statistical method for quantitative data analysis, the so-called chi-squared test statistic, because we wanted to verify whether the two variables were interdependent or linked. A total of 111 civil servants took part in the research, involving civil servants with permanent residence in Brežice and those who commute there because of work. Interviewing took place between 29 May 2016 in 3 June 2016, and it was carried out by the article authors. Anonymity was provided. On-line interviewing and data collection via questionnaires were used as interviewing techniques. Questionnaires were personally distributed to all headquarters of national and municipal services in the Municipality of Brežice, and the distribution of them was discussed with the managers. This is also how we collected data from those civil servants who migrated to work outside the municipality in times of public service restructuring. The completed questionnaires were left in an envelope later collected by the authors.

A total of 2208 people are employed in the public sector in the municipality; 50 civil servants must be added to this group. Due to public service restructuring, they had to change the place of their employment to outside the municipality. All survey sheets were delivered to all previously mentioned civil servants. Only 111 (or 4.9% of the whole population) responded. The number of answers received provides a 95% confidence level.

The questionnaire had two parts. In the first part, we were interested in the habits of civil servants with regards to service use. In the answers to five basic questions, services were classified, according to Lovelock and Wirtz (2011), into tangible and intangible, meant for people and their assets. We had four service categories: material and tangible services, oriented to the human body, services oriented to a person's assets, non-material or intangible services, oriented to human perception and services oriented to information processes. In all the mentioned fundamental questions, we attempted to determine what sort of service was most often used in the town of residence or in the town of work, what services were used in the employment or the residence municipality, and what sort of services were first used in the employment municipality. The other five questions of the first part were used to determine the connection between a service user or his organization with tourism. The importance of eight service characteristics (supply quantity, discount, service close to the workplace, etc.) were tested. Civil servants had to evaluate the answer on a measurement scale (not important at all to extremely important). While preparing the questionnaire, we followed the research of Addis and Grunhagen (2014), Van Leeuwen and Rietveld (2011), Reynolds and Darden (1972), all of whom conducted research about out-of-town shopping.

In the second part of the research, we used a qualitative paradigm: opinions and attitudes of civil servants concerning services and the position of public services were collected by use of semi-structured personal interviews. The role of qualitative research was more supplementary. In the preliminary phase, before questions were formed, in-depth interviews were used to introduce the research area; in the explanatory

phase, results were presented in greater detail with the help of the qualitative research. The research question is thus the same as the one set in the quantitative work. Three relevant individuals (civil servants) took part in the research:

1. the organization of Civil Servant A was in the list of those organizations that should rationalize business by integration of workplaces or their relocations;
2. the organization of Civil Servant B was relocated outside Posavje;
3. the organization of Civil Servant C has its office in Brežice, but he comes from another municipality.

The guidelines for in-depth interviews were formed according to thematic emphases in the questionnaire and based on questions of our own preliminary research. Interviews included 20 open-ended questions and took place between May 10 and June 10, 2016. Interviews with relevant individuals lasted approximately two hours and were carried out by the article authors.

Open-ended questions were classified into six sets:

1. purchase habits with emphasis on service use,
2. types and intensity of service use in town of residence and in town of work,
3. service classification according to Lovelock and Wirtz (2011),
4. experience/connection with tourism in the Brežice municipality,
5. evaluation of supply in the Brežice municipality, and
6. considering public service restructuring.

Before the formation of questions for the quantitative analysis, we received proper knowledge with in-depth interviews and investigated the area in order to prepare survey questions. The explanatory role of qualitative research allowed a wider interpretation of quantitative results.

Demography

In the analysis, demographic variables had the role of control variables. The research dealt with change of workplace location in connection with service use.

Demographic variables also allowed comparison with other previous research concerning purchasing in other towns.

Out of 111 respondents, 44.5% were men and 55.5% women. The respondents are divided into four age groups: (i) to 29 years, (ii) 30–39 years, (iii) 40–49 years and (iv) 50 years and over.

All 111 respondents answered the question about their municipality of residence. In addition to Brežice, they come from 18 different municipalities (Bistrica ob Sotli, Celje, Grosuplje, Ivančna Gorica, Kostanjevica na Krki, Kozje, Krško, Laško, Ljubljana, Maribor, Novo Mesto, Poljčane, Ptuj, Radeče, Sevnica, Šentjernej, Šmarje pri Jelšah, and Trebnje).

The results of their education reveal that 35.5% have a two-year higher education or higher education degree, 32% have university degree education or more, and 26.5% have finished secondary school. The lowest degree of their education is a vocational secondary school with 6% of respondents. The results concerning their final education degree differ significantly from the educational structure of the whole Slovenian population (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2015) where: 5.2% have two-year higher education or higher education degree, 11.4% have university degree education or more, and 52.7% have finished secondary school. This shows that the active working population in the public sector is more educated than that in the private one. In our research, only civil servants were interviewed.

Research Results and Discussion

The results of the research show that *the centralization of public services with the office in the Brežice municipality affects the change of location of service use*. Another finding is that service use is significantly connected with the workplace location because supply quality and workplace location are equally important for the choice of service use. Furthermore, the fact is that the more time a service consumer spends in the new working environment, the more services he uses there.

Among those who chose types of services most often used in the town of residence, catering was chosen by 47% of respondents and bank services by 18%.

Table 1 Use of Services in the Municipality of Employment According to Sex (%)

Category	Male	Female
Catering services	71	65
Personal services	26	40
Health services	16	45

Less than 10% use personal services (9.72%) and health service (8.33%). Other types of services were used by less than 2.77% respondents. The results show that the largest number of civil servants at workplace uses human-oriented services.

Chi-squared test statistics indicates that the sex of respondents is significantly connected with catering, personal and health services in the employment municipality. As depicted in Table 1, men (71%) in the municipality of their employment more often use catering services than women (65%) do, whereas women prevail in the use of personal (40%) and health services (45%). In general, men rarely use other types of service (except catering) in the town of their employment. Only 16% of men use health services and only 26% use personal services in the town of their employment.

The research also indicates that a change of the location of a service use can consequently affect crisis of tourist services in an urban environment because the presence of public services in Brežice has a strong impact on the structure and level of employment. Of the active working population, 33% are employed in the public sector, which affects the structure of employment. Consequently, public services as important employers have an influence on the level of employment/unemployment. According to the data from the Employment Service of Slovenia (Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje, 2016), the rate of unemployment in Brežice was 13.0% in November 2015 (in Slovenia 11.7%). The unemployment rate in Posavje is still higher than the Slovenian average, but it can even increase because of possible centralization and rationalization of public services. There is a rather alarming fact that civil servants are, on average, more educated, whereas on the other side the data of the Employment Service of Slovenia (Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje, 2016) in Posavje show that jobs with lower

Table 2 Evaluation of Incomes of Tourist Service Providers (%)

Service providers	(1)	(2)
Service provider 1	30	70
Service provider 2	40	60
Service provider 3	20	80
Service provider 4	70	30
Service provider 5	60	40

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) summer tourist season, (2) out of tourist season.

educational level (workers for simple work: civil engineering construction, waiters, toolmakers, drivers of heavy trucks and towing vehicles, cooks, bricklayers) are needed. In case of the centralization of public services, the Posavje market will face an extremely distinctive imbalance between the knowledge of job seekers and market opportunities. The chi-squared test statistic also shows that the frequency of service use in the employment municipality is significantly connected with the employment municipality.

It can be determined that the centralization of public services with offices in the Municipality of Brežice has a negative influence on tourism development, which is the driving force of the economy in Brežice. The data collected show that civil servants' service use throughout the year enables the survival of tourist service providers outside tourist season. Based on the evaluations of tourist providers in an urban environment, it can be concluded that the increased income during summer tourist season (July and August) and service use throughout the year enable economic survival outside the tourist season. Table 2 shows five tourist service providers. The first three are active in the field of catering services; the fourth one deals with marketing in sports tourism, and the fifth one is an event organizer. It is also obvious that the last two providers depend on the summer tourist season, which is true for caterers in Brežice. Their economic survival is enabled by civil servants who use their services throughout the year.

It has been found that organizations of 37% of civil servant respondents are in some way associated with tourism: (i) counselling concerning issuing approvals

Table 3 Types of Services in the Municipality of Employment

Service providers	A	B	C
Catering services	×	×	×
Bank services	×	○	×
Library	○	○	×
Personal services	○	○	×
Car repair services	×	○	×
Education	○	○	×
Health services	○	○	×

to work, (ii) education before entering the tourist sector, (iii) service potential research, (iv) help in creation of tourist services, (v) help in co-financing development of new activities, (vi) administrative support. The presence of public educational institutions in tourism in the Municipality of Brežice enables a transfer of knowledge to the existing tourist providers and, consequently, economic growth. Chi-squared test statistics also indicate that the municipality of residence is significantly connected with the transfer of knowledge and skills to the existing tourist providers. In addition, the municipality has a wide area of knowledge and skills transfer to the existing tourist providers.

The research analysis data were compared to analyses of interviews carried out by reference individuals. Regarding the purchase habits of the reference individuals, a drastic difference can be observed in answers of men and women, especially concerning service use in the employment municipality. As depicted in Table 3, Person C (female) uses seven types of services in the town of her employment: catering, bank services, library, personal repair services/car service, education, health services, Person A (male) uses only three types of services: catering, bank services, and repairs, whereas Person B (male) uses only catering services.

In conversation with the reference individuals about tourism and their experience with public service centralization, they all agree that tourism plays a vital role in the Municipality of Brežice. Even if they come from very different areas of work, they all notice the

connection with tourism, either via work or personal life.

The final part of interviews with the reference individuals deals with of state institution relocations. Their answers concerning public service centralization on change of location of service use and consequently on crises of tourist services in the urban environment have confirmed the results of desktop research and the interpretation of quantitative data:

1. crucial deterioration of access to services;
2. savings of the state funds, but higher payments of travel expenses;
3. decay of buildings and degradation of environment;
4. loss of life in urban environments;
5. lower incomes for local service and product providers;
6. loss of workplaces;
7. reduced possibility of further development of the Municipality of Brežice; and
8. lower purchasing capacity.

Van Leeuwen and Rietveld's findings (2011) can be confirmed by the results of the empirical part of our research. Chi-squared test statistics show that the ratio of size between the municipality of employment and the municipality of residence is significantly connected with more frequent service use in the employment municipality; 41% of civil servants that come from smaller municipalities more often use services in their employment municipality than in the municipality of their residence.

Part of the findings from Reynolds and Darden's study (1972) can also be confirmed by the results of our empirical part:

1. Chi-squared test statistics show that education is significantly connected with the more frequent use of services in the municipality of employment, outside the place of residence; 64% of those who do purchase outside their place of residence have higher or university degrees.
2. Chi-squared test statistic shows that average net personal salary is significantly connected with

the more frequent use of service in the employment municipality, outside the place of residence; 60% of those who often purchase outside the place of residence have an average net personal salary of more than €1000.

3. Chi-squared test statistic shows that age is significantly connected with more frequent use of services in the employment municipality, outside place of residence. Among that 80 % who often purchase outside the place of residence are the respondents aged 30 to 49.

Conclusion

We have conducted research concerning the problem of the centralization of state institutions, which has been strongly experienced by inhabitants of smaller urban centres in recent years. We have defined the decentralization of the Slovenian public administration on one side and its opposition (the proposals of the government) on the other side. Since 2009, the government has been advocating the rationalization of civil service and public service centralization via various working groups of different ministries.

Taking into account the fact that production-oriented economies are changing into service-oriented economies throughout the world and that tourism in Slovenia offers great possibilities (it currently provides 13% of all workplaces), further centralization of public services can cause a crisis of tourist services in an urban environment. The fact is that the locals and people employed in urban centres represent constant, non-seasonal, demand and enable providers' survival throughout the whole year. Therefore, public (administrative) services hand in hand with private offers create the whole service sector of an environment and its tourist attraction.

The improvement of civil service efficiency and the adjustment to new European standards are the bases for the necessary, planned reorganization of the Slovenian civil service. However, this should be implemented consensually, via the integration of economy, local population, local politics and by strategically adopted decisions that will be the result of integrated financial and development analyses. European standards, but especially European systems of

financing, are indicating, even today, the need to reorganize Slovenia, whereby regions will strategically develop the most efficient economic sectors, in connection with public services.

Limitations of the study are, first, its sample size; for further research it is necessary to carry out a study on a more representative sample in order to make a conclusion with higher certainty, and second, a lack of prior research studies on the topic.

It has been determined in the research that the centralization of public services could cause even more oscillations between seasonal and non-seasonal demand. Crucial off-season demand is represented by civil servants who commute from other municipalities because of public institutions, situated in the Municipality of Brežice.

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To Have Or Not to Have an Accommodation Classification System in Slovenia

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An accommodation classification system is a tool to sustain a high quality of accommodation services and to inform tourists about it. There are numerous hotel classification systems worldwide, and many are frequently amended. The purpose of this study is to collect destination stakeholders' opinions about the changes to the existing accommodation classification system and how best to implement them. Opinions were collected via an online questionnaire, mailed to the web addresses of 1,475 accommodation providers, tourism organizations, and classification assessors in Slovenia. The results are presented using descriptive statistics. Findings show that the majority of respondents support a mandatory classification system, which should be used for informing tourists and not for taxation purposes. Respondents believe that the system should be administered by the relevant government ministry. They accept the idea that only national experts should assess accommodation facilities. The majority of respondents favour a harmonized European system of hotel classification: Hotelstars. Tourism is an evolving process, which requires frequent changes and adaptation of tourism stakeholders. Successful implementation demands collaboration of all stakeholders involved.

Keywords: accommodation classification system, hotel industry, Slovenia, Hotelstars

Introduction

This study explores the opinions of the Slovenian tourism stakeholders on how best to change the accommodation classification system. Establishing or changing any such system for tourism accommodation is a complex undertaking due to the diversity of both accommodation types and of the cultural, environmental, and economic contexts in which systems are embedded (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015).

Historically, hotel classification systems were developed to ensure safe and reliable lodging and food for travellers at a time when very few such trustworthy establishments existed. Today, standardization and the competitive marketing of hotel services to foreign cus-

tomers and tourist professionals have emerged as driving forces for instituting a local or national hotel classification system (United Nations World Tourism Organization & International Hotel and Restaurant Association, 2004, p. 4).

Hotel classification systems are of great importance and interest to the accommodation industry and the wider tourism sector. When well designed, they offer an independent and trusted reference on the standard and quality of hotel services and facilities, thereby facilitating consumers in the choice of their accommodation. They also provide a framework for accommodation providers to market and position themselves appropriately and to leverage the investments they have made in the quality of their offer of products

and services (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 9).

State administrations in different countries apply classification systems for quality control, as well as a basis for imposing tariffs, subscriptions, fees and various forms of fiscal charges. Many authors (Abrate, Capriello, & Fraquelli, 2011; Hensens, 2015; Israeli, 2002. Núñez-Serrano, Turrión, & Velázquez, 2014; United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015; Torres, Adler, & Behnke, 2014) emphasize the importance of such classification systems in defining the various criteria that facilitate comparisons of hotels in different destinations and countries. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (2015) says that the benefits of classification systems, in addition to providing comparable information using simple rating symbols and serving as a justification for pricing, also provide a benchmarking tool to help prioritize investments.

Classification systems, irrespective of the fact that they are considered to be useful, have their weaknesses and challenges. According to Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, and Wanhill (2005), these weaknesses are related to subjectivity in evaluating the number of tangible and intangible hotel service elements. As a result, many classification schemes mainly focus on the tangible and quantifiable elements, such as room size, equipment availability, specific services, and other aspects. The fact that such systems do not cover all the elements of quality has also been confirmed by Cerović (2003), Šuligoj (2009), and Uran Maravić (2016). Cooper et al. (2005) cite challenges to classification systems such as political pressures in designing the classification criteria, categorizing expenses, appeals from the tourism sector regarding rigid and bureaucratic criteria, guidance towards standardization and uniformity of provision, rather than promoting individual excellence.

However, classification systems are not just a set of objective and subjective criteria in classification form. Legislators have to define the nature of the program (private/public), identify the organization to manage the program, the type of standards (hard/soft), the applicability of classification (voluntary/mandatory), the presence, types and frequency of controls, and other aspects. Many legislators do not know such specifics,

and therefore invite different tourism stakeholders to various workshops or to participate in surveys of opinions on the various elements of the system.

Based on United Nations World Tourism Organization studies (United Nations World Tourism Organization & International Hotel and Restaurant Association, 2004; United Nations World Tourism Organization 2015), we can conclude that most of the dilemmas and challenges of the past fifteen years have not been solved. To summarize, the main dilemma is about selecting a unified classification system that could be applied to many countries, when there are already too many different systems. The closest to an ideal is the European Hotelstars system. The second challenge is how to integrate online visitor assessment into a classification system.

This challenge has also been addressed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, which published a study in 2014 on classification systems and guest review web portals. This is based on the complementary nature of guest review online review portals and classification schemes. Guest reviews on website portals focus more on intangible (subjective) elements of service but, as stated earlier, classification schemes have usually focussed on objective and measurable elements. Combining the scores from the two 'poles:' quality, technical and functional components, definitely gives a complete picture of the quality, rather than that of just one component.

At present, the majority of queries relating to the purchase of tourism products take place online. United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014) states that guests make an average of 14 visits to various travel related sites, with three visits to the (destination's own) site and nine related searches prior to booking a hotel online. Guests usually use a hotel's official category as a filter in their reservation process, while using online reviews to assist with the final selection from a small number of suitable hotels.

Each country, with its cultural traditions, national and otherwise, uses a specific rating system, which prevents the application of a single global classification system (European Consumer Centres' Network, 2009, p. 5). Minazzi (2010) concurs, stating that star ratings in Europe are determined by local government

agencies or independent organizations, and they vary widely from country to country.

In Slovenia, accommodation classification operates on the basis of the Hospitality Act or the Regulations on the Classification of Accommodation Establishments and Annexes, classifying listings for each type of accommodation. The responsibility for fulfilling classification falls to the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia with the aid of specially qualified and certified assessors for accommodation establishments. The system is mandatory for all types of accommodation. Historically, the development of the classification system in Slovenia has two milestones and two major system changes, in 1997 and 2008. In both cases, criteria were based on the German standards (of the time). In 2014, there was a strong initiative to change the system in the direction of Hotelstars. The dilemma of whether to have a compulsory or voluntary system also remains, as part of the tourism economy sees the classification system as an element of coercion (Uran Maravič, 2016).

This study was designed following recommendations by Talias (2016). He advocates that new systems, or changes to the systems, require strong incentives or broad stakeholder consensus; otherwise, they are doomed to fail. The specific objective of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. What accommodation classification system do the stakeholders in Slovenia want?
2. What should be the purpose of the accommodation classification system?
3. Who should manage the system?
4. Who should assess accommodation establishments?
5. How should the current system change?

Literature Review

Few studies that answer specific questions about elements of classification systems. The Minazzi study (2010) examines classification systems through case studies in five European countries (Italy, France, Germany, Spain, UK), the USA, and Canada. Minazzi looked at specific countries, or at those countries with

their own official classification system, which hotel class, whether private or public, the managing organization, the types of criteria listed within their categories, or whether systems were oriented towards the customer, and how these were controlled. A study by Foris (2014) covered a few more countries, but his information largely summarized a study by the European Consumer Centres' Network from 2009. The only scientific international study covering several countries and also comparing criteria is the study by Cser and Ohuchi in 2008. In Slovenia, several published comparative studies were undertaken by Šuligoj (2009), Rumbak (2009, 2012), Cvikl (2008, 2009), and Uran Maravič (2016). In Table 1, we summarize some of the more relevant studies and their main findings.

Studies from Table 1 allow the following conclusions to be made:

1. Overall, very few studies investigate the area of hotel classification systems;
2. Of the available studies, the majority investigate the importance and relationship between hotel classification systems and hotel service quality;
3. Few studies provide a general review of the existing hotel classification systems worldwide; and
4. Evidence is also available for the future of hotel classification system and avenues provided by tourists reviews.

Furthermore, studies from hotel industry associations, which give a more in-depth view of the hotel classification systems and the comparison between different systems, are also available. For example, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and International Hotel and Restaurant Association (2004) study collates the results of two surveys regarding accommodation classification systems and a comparative analysis of their findings in 31 countries. Moreover, this study investigates the prevailing characteristics of classifications worldwide, which can be used as guidelines for setting up new or amending existing classification systems. Another study, provided by the European Consumer Centres' Network (2009) investigates existing systems of accommodation classification in all EU Member States, as well as Iceland and Norway. The latest study from United Nations World

Table 1 Overview of Research on Classification Systems

Reference	Research content	Main findings	Country
López Fernández and Ser-rano Bedia (2004)	This article discusses star-ratings as good indicators of the quality of the hotel.	They found that there are differences between the expected and perceived quality for hotels in different categories. They also noted that the expectations of guests in the higher categories were greater, which in their view indicates that quality scores are tied more to the quality of the services performed than the hotel category.	Spain
Briggs, Sutherland, and Drummond (2007)	The overall objective of the research was to investigate the level of quality of service in hotels of different sizes. Indirectly linked, was a research question devoted to what classification systems are, and whether they are directed by consumer preferences or targeted at the providers.	As it relates to classification systems, they note that these are too orientated towards tangible elements, such that they may have high-quality scores but still offer poor service. They suggest that such systems comprise both tangible and intangible elements.	Scotland
Cser and Ohuchi (2008)	They point out the many different systems, which damage confidence and cause confusion among consumers. They also studied Asian systems in order to emphasize the difference between European systems. They studied the structure of classification listings and the criteria themselves.	The results reveal levels of comparability for criteria in Swiss, German, Hungarian and Chinese of 50%, and 30% for Japan. The common criteria were based on room, bathroom, reception, lobby and common areas. As a reason for this, they attribute the influence of the local environment, as being greater than the complete tourist offer.	Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, China, and Japan
Šuligoj (2009)	The author shows the diversity of classification systems around the world and the reasons for that. For a precise definition of the Slovenian system, which is formal (though much less so than it was before the adoption of the new classification regulations in 2008), comparisons show differences between the national systems of Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, and Italy.	Clear organizational and conceptual differences have been identified as to the authorship and administration of the systems, mandated membership, control, and finance. Differences between the systems determine variances in hotel offers, which according to the author at this time are also advocated by organizations such as United Nations World Tourism Organization, International Hotel and Restaurant Association, and Hotelstars Union Association. In conclusion, it is revealed that (a) copying classification systems between countries is not appropriate or useful, (b) a diversity of systems is welcome (c) that without developing so-called functional quality we cannot expect quality hotel service.	Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, and Italy

Continued on the next page

Tourism Organization (2015) provides an overview of the main accommodation classification systems in Europe and at selected global destinations. It further provides comparisons between different systems and the range and recurrence of criteria in 4- and 5-star category hotels. These three studies served as a framework for this study.

Methodology

Empirical data for the present study was collected with an online questionnaire sent to main tourism stakeholders: accommodation providers, local tourism organizations, travel agencies, assessors and officials dealing with classification in Slovenia. The survey was conducted in May 2016. The questionnaire was sent to

Table 1 Continued from the previous page

Reference	Research content	Main findings	Country
Minazzi (2010)	Compares classification systems based on their benchmarking criteria. Compares the systems, not the classification criteria. Highlights the differences, the rise, and importance of ewom, makes connections to theories of quality.	The comparison shows that the situation is very heterogeneous. In addition, there were regional differences in each of the countries monitored. He also believes that developing a common European system is possible if there are minimum standards provided in each country. Until a unified system exists, hotel brand and assessment portals will be increasingly accepted over official classification.	Italy, France, Germany, Spain, UK, USA, and Canada
Stringam, Gerdes, and Van-leeuwen (2010)	The study looked for links between online assessment, finding a relationship between overall scores and scores in the specific four areas: hotel services, hotel condition, room cleanliness and room comfort. Indirectly touches on areas of the classification system. They emphasize the differences between systems, for example, US classification is managed by commercial organizations, using classification schemes that accurately describe which criteria must be met to achieve a specific category. They also state that the primary role of the classification system has changed, due to the emergence of online portals for guest assessment.	The authors relate hoteliers' reports saying that websites generate mostly bad reviews. Their study demonstrates the opposite, since 74.51% of the guest comments analyzed were by guests recommending the hotel. They studied the differences between criteria, the results of their analysis showed nothing significant.	USA
Abrate et al. (2011)	The article examines the relationship between the quality rating (stars) and price. Indirectly relates to quality systems. Because of the relationship with pricing, this article helps to clarify the meaning of quality rating.	They showed that quality ratings have a positive impact on the price rises and, unlike other studies, explain how. They also believe, based on the results of their study into updating classification systems, that the current selection of hotel attributes, according to consumer opinion, do not justify higher prices in the highest category.	Torino, Italy
Núñez-Serrano et al. (2014)	This article is dedicated to creating a list of objective quality criteria, or hotel quality index, as an alternative method for determining hotel quality based on demand, and whether hotel star-ratings are a good indicator of quality. It also notes the disunity among classification systems.	According to their quality index design, they found that, in general, a star-rating was a reasonably good indicator of quality, despite some variation that occurs in certain hotel categories.	Spain

Continued on the next page

the web addresses of 1475 contacts; 1050 of these were accommodation providers, 420 were local tourism organizations or similar, and five chambers of commerce and associations. The majority of the participants in this survey were general managers, but some were also operational managers. The questionnaire was selected

by 424 respondents and partially completed by 46% of them. Overall, 151 (36%) respondents returned fully completed questionnaires. In total, the questionnaire was sent to 1,475 addresses; full completions amounting to 10.23%; 13.15% of the online questionnaires were fully or partially completed. Further analysis of fully or

Table 1 Continued from the previous page

Reference	Research content	Main findings	Country
Torres et al. (2014)	This study explores how hotel managers obtain feedback from the guests (web portals), experts and internal resources to improve quality. The study is indirectly linked to classification systems since the authors view assessors and secret guests as experts who provide feedback as the basis for improvements in quality.	The results show that managers apply different amounts of time to obtaining feedback. Similarly, the reliability of all the information is not uniform. They found a strong correlation between the results of satisfaction surveys and online assessments, as well as between online assessments and expert assessment.	USA
Hensens (2015)	The purpose of this paper is to delve into future classification systems. It takes a view on the impact of social networking, as a technology that enables integration of guest data, hotel operations, and official classification bodies.	The article predicts full integration of traditional classification systems with web customer review portals (as already takes place in Australia). Even more radically it predicts that traditional systems will not survive if they do not integrate.	–
Talias (2016)	This article analyses the return of the classification system in Israel. After 20 years, the country introduced a voluntary system along the lines of Hotelstars. The authors say that other studies focus on the capabilities of a classification system, reflecting the quality of the hotel services, or a correlation between growth and income, or a correlation between guest satisfaction and category, or similarities and differences between systems. What interested them was the difference between voluntary and mandatory systems, and within those, whether managed by public or private organization, and the implications of this.	The authors note that the attempt to re-establish a system of classification met with disapproval from the Israeli hotelier associations and other stakeholders, despite huge efforts and the low cost of registration. The study has practical implications regarding the means by which voluntary regulatory regimes can be established. These need to be established using strong incentives or with the strong agreement of stakeholders, otherwise, according to the authors, they are doomed to fail.	Israel
Uran Maravić (2016)	The book covers two main studies: a comparison between the Hotelstars criteria and criteria in the Slovenian classification listings, and a survey on the opinions of stakeholders on the current system and changes.	By comparison, the author finds Hotelstars criteria milder than the existing system. Part of the research opinions is presented in this article.	Hotelstars, Slovenia

partially completed questionnaires received by 20 May 2016 was then undertaken. The client for this study did not wish to disclose details of the recipients due to data protection issues. As a result, it is difficult to define the breakdown of respondents and consequently whether the sample is representative or not.

The questionnaire consists of statements intended to measure participant's positions on the development of the classification system and is part of a larger study about the hotel classification system in Slovenia. The present study presents findings from questions pertaining to the five research questions as discussed in

the introduction section of this paper. The studies by United Nations World Tourism Organization and International Hotel and Restaurant Association (2004), European Consumer Centres' Network (2009) and United Nations World Tourism Organization (2015) were used to guide questionnaire design. The questionnaire data is analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results

This section is devoted to the presentation of research results. We first present data on the survey sample.

Table 2 shows the descriptive variables for the socio-

Table 2 Descriptive Variables of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Category	Sub-category	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	60	40
	Female	91	60
	Total	151	100
Age	Up to 25	2	1
	From 26 to 35	29	19
	From 36 to 45 years	51	34
	From 46 to 55 years	35	23
	Over 56 years	34	23
	Total	151	100
Education	Elementary school or lower	0	0
	Vocational school (2 or 3 years of schooling)	8	5
	4-year high school	30	20
	Further education	15	10
	Higher education – 1st level	28	19
	University educated or 2nd tier Bologna level (Bologna masters)	54	36
	Research masters	11	7
	Doctorate	5	3
	Total	151	100
Organization type	Public sector	13	9
	Society or association	2	1
	Assessor	4	3
	Hotelier	41	27
	Other accommodation service	42	28
	Local tourism organization	14	9
	Other	34	23
	Total	150	100

demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, the level of education completed and the type of organization in which the respondent is employed. Demographic data was collected at the end of the questionnaire. Not all respondents completed the survey. The sample included 151 respondents, 40% men and 60% women. The majority of respondents were aged between 36 and 55 years.

The majority of those surveyed (65%) who submitted a fully completed questionnaire had completed further education or higher. The largest group of respondents (55%) were tourism sector workers. Work-

ers in local/regional/national tourist organizations amounted to 9%, public sector employees to 9%, 1% of respondents were representatives of Chambers of Commerce, 23% were in other tourism-related activities, and 3% were classification assessors.

Respondents were first asked what their preferences for a future system of classification would be. With both mandatory and voluntary systems existing globally, respondents were given explanations that a mandatory classification system is one in which all accommodation establishments are required to be classified, and the voluntary system is in which accommo-

Table 3 Types of Classification System Preferred

Type of classification system	<i>f</i>	%
Mandatory	120	62
A combination of both (voluntary for lower categories, mandatory for higher)	34	18
Voluntary	21	11
A combination of both (mandatory for hotels, for others not)	14	7
Other	5	3
Total	194	100

Table 4 Purpose of a Classification System

Purpose	(1)	(2)	(3)
Informing guests	32	59	91
Protecting guests	36	42	78
International comparison of accommodation quality	37	47	84
As the basis for inclusion in promotional materials and STO activities	31	27	58
As the basis for payment of tourist tax	14	10	24
As the basis for payment of property tax or other charges	10	6	16

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) partly agree (%), (2) completely agree (%), (3) total agreement (%).

Table 5 Organizations Responsible for the Classification System

Organization	<i>f</i>	%
MGRT, Directorate for Tourism and Internationalization	83	47
Tourism and Hospitality Chamber of Slovenia – TGZ	54	31
Association of Hoteliers Slovenia – ZHS	18	10
Other	17	10
Chamber of Craft Slovenia – OCS	5	3
Total	177	100

dation establishments can be classified if they wish.

The majority of respondents (62%) wanted a mandatory system of classification, as currently exists, which includes all accommodation establishments. In addition, 25% of respondents believe that a mandatory system is only required for certain accommodation establishments. In total, this means that 87% of respondents favour a mandatory system.

Studies by United Nations World Tourism Organization and International Hotel and Restaurant Association (2004) show that 65% of 23 countries have a mandatory system of classification. Research by the European Consumer Centres' Network (2009) of 27

EU Member States (Finland does not have a system), 60% have a mandatory system.

The next question was intended to measure opinions about the purpose of a classification system. We asked respondents whether the system serves to inform the customers, or, for example, is the basis for collecting various types of tariffs or benefits.

Over three-quarters of respondents believe that the classification system is intended to provide information, assure the guests, and for international comparison of accommodation. More than half of the respondents agree that classification is necessary for inclusion in promotional materials and activities of the Slove-

Table 6 Accommodation Assessors

Who should assess?	<i>f</i>	%
Competent national assessor	60	34
Self-assessment (assessment by owner)	30	17
Competent national and foreign combined assessment	25	14
Committee of competent assessors	23	13
Other	16	9
Respected representatives of the profession and business	14	8
Competent foreign assessor	6	3
Total	174	100

Table 7 Preferences about Changes to the Current Classification System

Type of change	<i>f</i>	%
Yes, Hotelstars system should be introduced	55	36
Yes, incorporate some elements of Hotelstars into the current system	36	23
Yes, a significant update	33	21
Yes, other unspecified changes	12	8
No, no changes	18	12
Total	154	100

nian Tourism Organization (STO). Respondents were strongly opposed to classification as a basis for the imposing of any charges, such as tourist tax, property tax or other charges. A fifth of respondents claims to have no preference about category being a basis for promotion material and STO activities or a basis for taxation purposes.

We wanted to know which organization should be responsible for managing the accommodation classification system. The organization would be responsible for keeping records, training, and supervising evaluators, and so on.

Most of the respondents selected the Ministry for Economics and Technological Development (MGRT), Directorate for Tourism and Internationalization. In this context, respondents also emphasized that assessment training should be conducted jointly with experts. Within the EU, 37% of the responsibility for assessment falls to professional associations and 36% to Ministries and Directorates (European Consumer Centres' Network, 2009; Foris, 2014). It is necessary

to emphasize that professional associations and other countries are older and organized differently, and, therefore, have a different reputation and influence among stakeholders. Minazzi (2010), and United Nations World Tourism Organization and International Hotel and Restaurant Association (2004) report similar preferences.

As there are a number of different assessing models available, respondents were asked about their preference. Slovenia uses two different models, namely the self-assessment by the provider of accommodation service or assessment by national licence assessors. The practice is different in the EU, where assessors work individually and in the assessing committees. Hotelstars does not recognize self-assessment for accommodation. Table 6 provides results about the respondents' preferences towards different assessing models.

The respondents largely believe that assessment should be done by a competent national assessor. Around half believe, to a lesser extent, in self-assess-

ment or an assessment commission. The least votes were received for foreign-trained assessors (3%).

We asked for an opinion on whether changes to the existing system are needed and if so, what kind of changes. As previously mentioned, there was a desire to change the system in Slovenia towards the Hotelstars system, which is an attempt to harmonize the hotel classification system in Europe. In 2009, seven countries committed to using virtually the same hotel classification criteria, becoming the founders of the Hotelstars Union Association. In 2011, the three Baltic nations and Luxembourg joined; Malta, as the first Mediterranean country, joined in 2012, with Belgium, Denmark and Greece joining in 2013 (Uran Maravić, 2016).

Most respondents opted for introducing the Hotelstars system or incorporating Hotelstars criteria into the current system. Although the majority of respondents consider the current system to be good (Uran Maravić, 2016), only 12% did not suggest some change.

Discussion and Conclusions

In the hotel industry, the star rating and/or membership of a hotel chain express quality. Such quality ratings are known to tourists and serve as valuable information in the decision-making process (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015). However, there are many destinations where internationally recognized quality ratings have not yet been established. This is also true of Slovenia, where overall there are few quality rating initiatives, and it is very unlikely that more will be introduced soon. Thus, a strong national accommodation classification system, be it completely national or international, is the only guarantee of quality for the guest.

Due to two unsatisfactory changes of the national accommodation system in the past (1997 and 2008), stakeholders are sensitive to future changes. In 2014, there was a strong initiative to change the system towards the Hotelstars system. The ministry responsible for tourism commissioned this study in order to determine what changes tourism stakeholders believe necessary. This article represents only part of the study. Below, we present the answers to the research questions.

We have determined that Slovenian tourism stakeholders want a mandatory system. Thus, the majority of those legislated in countries within Europe can be established from the studies of the European Consumer Centres' Network (2009), Foris (2014), and United Nations World Tourism Organization (2015). Respondents are highly opposed to accommodation classification being used as the basis for setting the tourist tax, following the example of Italy and many others (e.g. 1* equals a one euro tourist tax, 5* equals a five euro tourist tax). We believe that the fairest way to set such duties are on the basis of categories, as research demonstrates the relation between price and category (Abrate et al., 2011; López Fernández & Serrano Bedia, 2004; Núñez-Serrano et al., 2014).

In the EU, 37% of classification services are managed by professional associations and 36% by ministries and directorates (European Consumer Centres' Network, 2009). In our study, almost half of the respondents preferred this to be done by Slovenia's MGRT, Directorate for Tourism and Internationalization. In total, about 40% of the respondents believe that this should be a chamber or association; a further 10% mentioned other options, most of which are managed chambers and associations. The respondents largely believe that a competent national assessor should make the assessments. To a lesser extent, less than half supported self-assessment or an assessment commission.

Most of the respondents want the introduction of the Hotelstars system, which is a serious attempt to harmonize the classification system in Europe and has already been adopted by 16 states. That harmonization has been successful, according to the majority of the studies cited in this article, including the European Consumer Centres' Network and United Nations World Tourism Organization.

The findings demonstrate that stakeholders share a similar opinion about the need to change the current classification system, yet they differ in their preference for the type of changes. This demonstrates the need to involve stakeholders in the changes to the accommodation system, also validated by other studies (Talias, 2016; United Nations World Tourism Organization & International Hotel and Restaurant Association, 2004)

to assure a smooth transition to an amended system of accommodation classification. Another indicator of the need to involve stakeholders in the process of changing the accommodation classification system is the differences in their preference about the body that should be responsible for the system management. It has been demonstrated that disagreements between tourism stakeholders obstruct tourism development (Uran Maravić, 2016); thus, only a common consensus will make changes accepted and long lasting.

Our recommendations take into account the opinions of Talias (2016), who advocates that changes to the system must take into account the opinions of stakeholders. In addition to exploring the best practices indicated by United Nations World Tourism Organization and European Consumer Centres' Network, it would be useful if more research were conducted into comparative studies and/or case studies of individual countries. It would also be meaningful to translate worldwide classification system documentation into English, consistent with the principles of Hotelstars, thus enabling continuous comparison of system elements and categorization lists.

The present study is limited by the unrepresentative sample size and relatively low response rate. Another limitation is of an ethical nature as the commissioner of the study imposed a restriction on information use within the entire study, which affected the research design and interpretation of results.

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The Importance of Energy for the Tourism Sector

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This paper studies the problems and specific issues related to tourism and energy consumption. The purpose of this paper is establishing the cause and effect relationship between tourism and energy consumption and determining whether the increase in the number of tourists increases energy consumption. The paper analyses the following EU countries with similar economic climates: Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The analysis of the secondary data from statistical databases (Eurostat, WTO, IEA) using indicators such as the number of overnight stays, GDP and energy consumption, serves to establish the relationship between energy and tourism. In all observed countries, programme activities in the previous period were directed toward energy management capacity building and measures with a lower cost of implementation, such as educational and informational projects. This resulted in significant energy savings in the service sector, which is further demonstrated in the empirical part of the paper. The results indicate an increase in the number of overnight stays in all analysed countries, and show an evident direct impact of tourism on GDP. However, in some countries, an increase in the number of overnight stays does not increase energy consumption. These results indicate that some countries (Slovenia) have a more developed economy and therefore higher energy consumption, compared to some other countries (Croatia). This research provides reliable and actual qualitative and quantitative data about the problems of energy and tourism, as well as the overview of indicators in selected countries, demonstrating the cyclical relationship between tourism, economy, and energy.

Keywords: tourism, energy consumption, economic development, GDP

Introduction

Tourism needs to be considered from the viewpoint of energy consumption and the emission of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, especially CO₂ (Dobois & Ceron, 2006). According to the estimates by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2016),

tourist traffic will constantly grow, and the European Union will record growing rates. For this reason, the issue needs to be studied further. The growth of tourist traffic and the increase in the number of tourists not only contribute to the economic welfare of the country but also to its energy consumption (Katirciogulu,

2014). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to show the cause and effect relationship between tourism and energy consumption, and its impact on economic development. This is done through an analysis of indicators such as electric power consumption, the number of nights at tourist accommodation per inhabitant, and GDP. Since an increase in tourism activities comes with an increased demand for energy within various functions, the importance of energy for the tourism sector is undeniable. EU countries, as well as the entire international community, should act responsibly towards the environment, i.e. be an active participant in sustainable development while preserving natural resources. This refers to all segments of society including citizens, their households, as well as industry, transport, economy and tourism (Bačelić Medić, Pukšec, Mathiesen, & Duić, 2014). The current concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere is already on the verge of environmentally acceptable limits, and the expected population growth and increased personal and public standards will have as a consequence an increase in energy consumption. This represents a great challenge, but also a great economic cost. The tourism sector is further expected to grow and develop which will, in turn, contribute to an increase in energy consumption. The increase in energy consumption caused by tourism development can have numerous negative effects on the quality of the environment, caused by climate change.

Literature Review

Several parallel processes are present in the service sector: the increase of energy efficiency increased capacity, the increase of heating and cooling energy consumption and the increase of the number of power consumers. Regarding energy demand, the service sector (and thus tourism as well) is constantly growing due to the long-term trends of energy consumption growth, which has only slowed in recent years. In this sector, two aspects should be considered: commercial services and public sector services. For example, in Croatia, commercial services account for about 12% of total energy consumption, while the public sector consumes about half the amount (Granić, 2012). The most important factor in commercial services is tourism,

while in the public sector those are health care institutions, schools and the like. Given their nature, in terms of energy, these sectors largely coincide with the building sector, but there are many other forms of energy consumption (food processing, washing, etc.). These two aspects of the service sector require a different approach: in commercial services (and tourism) through property owners, hoteliers, tourism managers and private owners, while the public sector requires a programmatic approach from the government bodies, local governments, and self-governments. This approach has turned the public sector into a leader in energy efficiency (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In all observed countries, programme activities in the previous period were directed toward energy management capacity building and measures with a lower cost of implementation, such as educational and informational projects (SEM, 2013). This resulted in significant energy and economic savings, representing a quality guideline for the commercial service sector and the building sector in general.

Furthermore, a number of regional energy agencies emerged, which soon became involved in local energy activities within these sectors. One prerequisite for development is the appropriate set of regulations that would address the current barriers to the implementation of these projects and for which there are EU guidelines (European Commission, 2010). The service sector is certainly an area of dynamic development of energy usage with high growth potentials (Irsag, Pukšec, & Duić, 2012). The increased concerns about the state of the environment and sustainable development of tourism lead to an increased interest of scientists to study the impact of tourism trends in energy consumption, CO₂ emissions, and GDP (Becken, Simmons, & Frampton, 2003). However, the literature on energy economics is focused on the link between economic development, energy consumption, and climate change, and the results remain inconclusive (Katirciogulu, 2014). Some studies investigated the connection between energy consumption and real income growth (Kraft & Kraft, 1978; Lise & Monotfort, 2007; Odhiambo, 2009; Tang & Abosedra, 2014), others the validity of the environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis (Mulali & Ozturk, 2016), but few stud-

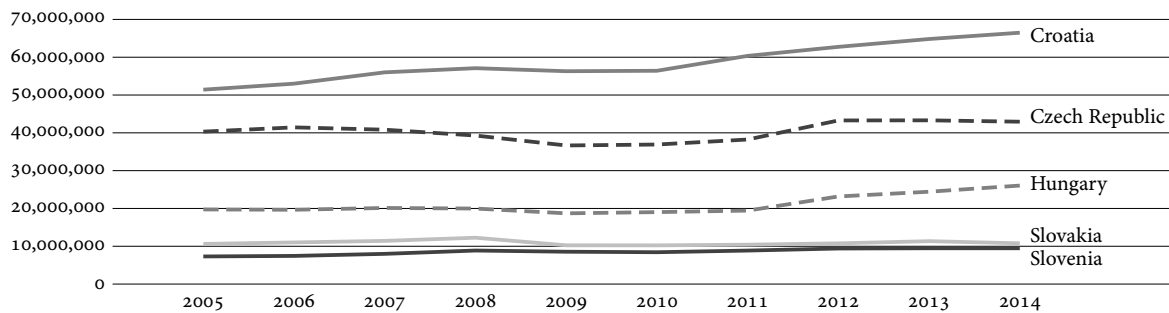


Figure 1 Nights Spent at Tourist Accommodation Establishments in the Period 2005–2014 (based on data provided by Eurostat, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>)

ies examined the impact of tourism on energy consumption (Katirciogulu, 2014). Thus, for example, Gossling (2002) estimates that the energy consumption of global tourism is 14.8 PJ, of which 94% refers to the transportation sector, 3.5% to the accommodation sector and the rest to the activities sector. The global tourism industry requires vast amounts of energy for the production of its products, services and visitor experiences (Kelly and Williams, 2007; Becken, 2002; Becken & Simmons, 2002; Gossling, 2002). As awareness of tourism's energy impacts on the global environment increases, so does the knowledge of energy consumption's effects on tourism destination sustainability. Although the tourism sector in the European Union has been growing for years, little attention has been paid to controlling the destruction of natural resources and environmental pollution that affect the social conditions, culture and local environment of tourist destinations (Ozturk, 2016).

The Importance of Tourism for Selected Countries in The European Union

Tourism is the largest generator of well-being and employment in the world, and an engine for economic development, both in developed and the developing countries (Blažević, 2007). According to the European Commission, it is the third largest socio-economic activity in the EU (after the trade and distribution, and construction sectors), and has an overall positive impact on economic growth and employment. Traditionally, Europe plays a significant role in the overall international tourism flow, with a share of 51.4% (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015) in 2014. However, this percentage decreases from year to year;

while the period of 1985–1990 was marked by the annual growth rate of 7.4% (Jansen-Verbeke, 1995), this percentage decreased to 2.8% in the period of 2006–2014. For this reason, the European Union has placed much emphasis on the tourism sector as an engine of economic prosperity for its member countries given that the tourism sector does not merely represent a significant revenue stream, but also a vital source of employment and entrepreneurial vitality (Antonakakis, Grafooni, & Filis, 2015). In accordance with the different levels of development of the tourism services and infrastructure, the observed countries display different results, as shown in Figure 1.

Among the five selected countries, the highest number of overnight stays was realized in Croatia, already recognized as a tourism country. Croatia's tourism industry is characterized by mass tourism and 'sun and sea' as the main tourism product. Recently, a number of attempts to move away from such products have been made, resulting in the development of various selective forms of tourism such as cultural, health, sports tourism, and others. The second of the surveyed countries is the Czech Republic, with its capital Prague as one of the main generators of the number of overnight stays. In addition, the Czech Republic offers a number of health resorts, spas and ski resorts as places of interest. Compared to these two countries, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia do not achieve such significant results but nevertheless, develop the products offered on the tourism market and thus ensure a competitive advantage. Furthermore, considering the economic variables in the observed countries, it can be concluded that tourism in Croatia is a more significant backbone of economic development, due to its

Table 1 Tourism Contribution to GDP and Employment

Country	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Croatia	12.5	28.3	13.6	30.2	9000
Slovenia	3.5	12.7	3.9	13.0	14800
Czech Republic	2.6	8.0	4.9	10.0	11300
Hungary	3.9	10.3	5.6	9.8	8400
Slovakia	2.3	5.9	2.4	5.8	9500

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) direct contribution to GDP, (2) total contribution to GDP, (3) direct contribution to employment, (4) total contribution to employment, (5) GDP per capita in EUR. Based on data from Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>).

greater contribution to GDP and employment. On the one hand, this can be an advantage, but on the other hand, changeable tourism cannot be the main and sole driver of economic development, nor would it be desirable for any of the analysed countries.

Other than Croatia, a significant contribution of tourism to GDP is recorded in Slovenia, which also has the highest GDP among the surveyed countries. Similarly, with a direct contribution to GDP of 3.9%, and direct contribution to employment of 5.6%, Hungary also displays a certain dependence on the tourism sector.

The development of tourism in Europe, and hence in the abovementioned countries, contributes to a stronger consolidation of the European Union, guaranteeing a link between regions and countries with their own systems, languages, traditions, and cultures.

Energy Consumption Assessment for the 2005–2013 Period

In the scientific and professional circles, CO₂ is widely accepted as the key factor of climate change, which can be altered by human activity, and thus affect the process of global warming (Šverko Grdić & Krstinić Nižić, 2016). Nowadays, due to the achieved level of technological development, the reduction of CO₂ emissions is considered to be most effectively achieved in the energy sector. This particularly refers to electricity production, where renewable energy sources (RES) play a significant role in reducing CO₂ emissions and show high potential for further CO₂ emissions reduc-

tion. However, thermal power generation plants require emission allowances that must be purchased on the EU ETS market. The current price of emission allowances for CO₂ is EUR 5–7/t (European Commission, 2010). With the withdrawal of about 900 million emission allowances on the EU ETS market, the price of CO₂ emission allowance is expected to exceed EUR 15/t.

To reduce CO₂ emissions, one of the EU 2020 targets is achieving 20% of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption while taking into account (European Commission, 2010):

1. individual national targets,
2. different starting points of each country,
3. the potential of renewable energy sources and
4. economic climate in EU member states.

These objectives are also pursued by other European countries that are not EU members. Electric power consumption in kWh per capita for selected countries is shown below. Electric power consumption measures the production of power plants and combined heat and power plants minus transmission, distribution, and transformation losses and own use by heat and power plants.

Table 2 shows a steady increase in electric power consumption in all surveyed countries. An economy's production and consumption of electricity are basic indicators of its size and level of development. Although a few countries export electric power, most production is for domestic consumption. Expanding the supply of electricity to meet the growing demand of increasingly urbanized and industrialized economies without incurring unacceptable social, economic, and environmental costs is one of the great challenges facing developing countries. Modern societies are becoming increasingly dependent on reliable and secure electricity supplies to support economic growth and community prosperity. This reliance is set to grow as more efficient and less carbon-intensive forms of power are developed and deployed to help decarbonize economies. Maintaining reliable and secure electricity services while seeking to rapidly decarbonize power systems is a key challenge for countries throughout the world. In developing economies,

Table 2 Electric Power Consumption

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Croatia	3,475.9	3,635.8	3,737.6	3,878.0	3,711.6	3,813.7	3,900.6	3,819.3	3,754.3
Slovenia	6,917.9	7,123.5	7,137.8	6,920.0	6,103.4	6,521.1	6,806.2	6,777.8	6,833.2
Slovakia	4,932.8	5,153.1	5,272.4	5,294.4	4,954.1	5,201.4	5,347.5	5,137.8	5,202.5
Hungary	3,771.4	3,882.5	3,976.5	3,988.8	3,773.2	3,876.5	3,898.8	3,922.1	3,890.3
Czech Republic	6,357.4	6,528.5	6,518.2	6,489.1	6,139.4	6,348.4	6,298.7	6,304.6	6,284.8

Notes kWh per capita. Based on data from the International Energy Agency (<http://www.iea.org/statistics>) and the World Bank (<http://databank.worldbank.org>).

growth in energy use is closely related to growth in the modern sectors (industry, motorized transport, and urban areas) but energy use also reflects climatic, geographic, and economic factors (such as the relative price of energy). Energy use has been growing rapidly in low- and middle-income economies, but high-income economies still use almost five times as much energy on a per capita basis. Governments in many countries are increasingly aware of the urgent need to make better use of the world's energy resources. Improved energy efficiency is often the most economical and readily available means of improving energy security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Tourism Destination Energy Consumption in Selected Countries

Energy is supplied to tourism resort destinations through a series of extraction, conversion and distribution systems. Energy use in tourism destinations is normally disproportionately greater than what is typically associated with other similar sized communities. This is largely due to the extensive use of energy-intensive technologies that deliver tourism amenities. A substantial quantity of energy is also required to construct new infrastructure, accommodations, and other facilities. The effects of the tourism industry can be divided according to the sectors, direct, indirect, and induced effects.

The potential cumulative effect of emissions associated with energy and the development of tourism destinations can be significant on both the local and global scales. On a local scale, air pollution is often caused by emissions arising from motor vehicles. Furthermore, air pollution reduces the beauty of a tourism

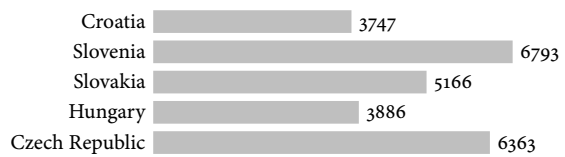


Figure 2 Average Electric Power Consumption, 2005–2013 (kWh per capita)

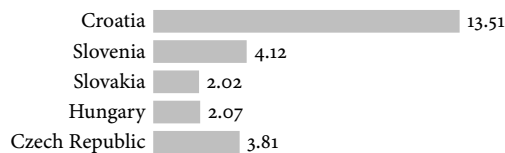


Figure 3 Average Nights at Tourist Accommodation per Inhabitant, 2005–2013

destination. Among the analysed countries, Croatia has the highest realized number of nights at tourist accommodation per inhabitant, but also the lowest electric power consumption (kWh per capita). However, countries such as Slovenia and the Czech Republic, which do not have such a large share of tourism in GDP and thus prove that they have developed other industries, have a higher rate of electric power consumption.

In the observed period, Croatia had the highest number of tourists, but the lowest electric power consumption. One of the reasons for this is that the share of tourism in GDP is as high as 13.6%. In contrast, Slovenia realized the smallest number of overnight stays, but also the highest energy consumption per capita, and the highest gross domestic product. At the level of all five observed countries, the data provide the following descriptive statistics.

As Table 4 shows, the ratio between nights at tourist accommodation per inhabitant and the mean value is

Table 3 Tourism's Effects on Destination Energy and GHG Emissions

Sector	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Induced effects
Residential	Energy consumed domestically by tourists staying in residential dwellings	–	Energy consumed domestically by resort workforce
Passenger Transportation	Energy consumed by tourists using private transportation	–	Energy consumed by resort workforce using private transportation
Commercial, industrial and institutional	Energy consumed by business in providing tourists with products and services	Energy consumed by businesses in providing other tourism businesses with products and services	Energy consumed by businesses in providing resort workforce with products and services
Municipal Buildings and Infrastructure	Energy consumed in providing tourists with municipal services	Energy consumed in providing tourism businesses with municipal services	Energy consumed in providing resort workforce with municipal services
Public Transport	Energy consumed in providing tourists with public transportation	–	Energy consumed in providing resort workforce with public transportation

Notes Adapted from Kelly and Williams (2007).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for All Observed Countries in the Period 2005–2013

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Nights at tourist accommodation per inhabitant	76,337,372	518,168,000	247,476,732	188,098,348
Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	33,726	61,140	46,722	12,509
GDP	8,400	14,800	10,600	2,585

higher in Croatia and the Czech Republic than in the other countries. The mean value of electric power consumption is higher in Slovenia and the Czech Republic than in the other countries.

From this, we can conclude that with regards to energy consumption, not only tourism but also other sectors of the economy play a significant role.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Sustained and long-term policies regarding tourism development are one of the missions across the globe for attracting tourists. However, the lack of proper policy planning and its implementation leads to serious environmental degradation. Tourism's role as a contributor to global energy consumption recently gained academic and institutional attention. This paper empirically investigated the long-term equilibrium relation between indicators such as the number of overnight stays, energy consumption, and GDP in

selected countries, in order to emphasize the importance of a more rational use of energy. Tourism entities will play a major role in the implementation of various measures for the rationalization of energy use. The emphasis on energetically sustainable tourism should come from two directions: from the tourists, who understand the damage they cause to the local community; and the local population that often refuses to accept responsibility for any damage caused by their own activities (e.g. the destruction of the environment and cultural and historical heritage). Both sides should insist that legislators and the industry ensure a sustainable tourism, and to properly coordinate their behaviours. Recommendations for future research are:

- Making accurate estimates of energy consumption for different types of power consumers.
- Providing more detailed information concern-

ing energy consumption in relation to various tourism destination's facilities and activities.

- Exploring the relationship between seasonality and energy consumption.

Such research would enable the development of a specific energy model that would provide the tourism destination planners with valuable information about the energy efficiency of their decisions.

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Spatial Agglomeration and Interrelation between KIS and Tourism: The Case of Poland

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The aim of this research is twofold: (1) to identify clusters of tourism and of Knowledge Intensive Services (KIS) providers as inter-regional agglomerations, including the scope and strength of spillovers between Polish districts, and (2) to investigate the spatial relations between regional tourist development and KIS providers' localization. To measure inter-regional agglomeration phenomena, we apply spatial statistics of autocorrelation (local Moran's I_i statistic): Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA). We also use contingency tables to study the relationship between tourism development and the localization of KIS providers in Polish districts. We use data collected by the Polish Central Statistical Office for 2009 and 2015 in 380 Polish districts (firms registered in sections I and J of NACE classification and the number of tourists staying overnight). We observe statistically significant spillover effects in tourism supply in both urbanization- and localization-type clusters as well as the convergence processes of agglomeration in urbanized regions in relation to tourism and KIS clusters. Moreover, we find that mature tourism destinations are characterized by both low and high intensity of KIS, depending on the type of clusters (urbanized or localized). The highest percentage of districts with high growth in tourist development refers to the medium and high share of KIS providers. The results indicate a positive correlation between the share of KIS providers in districts' economies and dynamic growing tourism destinations. They also emphasize the need for research on the role of KIS (including ICTs) at different stages of tourism development and enhancing regional innovativeness.

Keywords: Knowledge Intensive Services, tourism destinations, agglomeration, clusters, spillover effects, Polish districts

Introduction

Innovation is argued to benefit from interactions, and thereby cooperation, between firms in spatial proximity (Brodzicki & Kuczevska, 2012; Balland, Boschma, & Frenken, 2014). It seems to be especially impor-

tant with respect to tourism destinations as they concentrate interlinked companies and institutions of the broadly-defined tourism industry and are characterized by the occurrence of a decisive, intersectoral knowledge, crucial for innovation (Bieger & Weinert,

2006). Additionally, in the contemporary economy, the context of a growing need for the creative use of various forms of knowledge (Alves, 2007) as well as the rapid development of creative industries, which are merging with other sectors, such as tourism industry (European Cluster Observatory, 2013), should be taken into consideration.

The tourist sector attracts Knowledge-Intensive Services (KIS) providers (by generating demand for their services) who deliver knowledge essential for undertaking innovation-based activities in tourism. Thus, the intensification of KIS occurrence in a given area may enhance the innovativeness of both enterprises and the entire tourism destination since those services are used in innovative regional processes. It is of particular significance for (1) emerging tourism destinations, (2) destinations characterized by the dynamic growth of tourism, and (3) destinations which need to introduce rejuvenation strategies in order to enhance their development and avoid stagnation. Therefore, the processes of clustering are necessary, i.e. spatial concentration of knowledge-intensive and tourism-related business activities and the occurrence of agglomeration economies: both specialization (localization) and diversity (urbanization) externalities (Beaudry & Schiffauerova, 2009; Prager & Thisse, 2012).

It is, therefore, essential from the research perspective to examine, on the one hand, the occurrence, strength, and scope of the phenomenon of spatial agglomeration (concentration of economic activity in the spatial proximity) with regards to KIS and tourism. On the other hand, the interrelation between the occurrence of KIS and tourism providers in the local economy should be further investigated, considering different types of tourism destinations (urbanized vs. localized) and different stages of their life cycle. Thus, the aim of the research is: (1) to identify clusters of tourism and of Knowledge-Intensive Services (KIS) providers as the inter-regional agglomeration, including the scope and strength of spillovers between Polish districts, and (2) to investigate spatial relations between regional tourist development and KIS providers' localization.

We employ the explorative spatial data analysis

(ESDA), applying spatial statistics of autocorrelation (local Moran's I_i statistic) under the so-called Local Indicators of Spatial Association (Anselin, 1995, 2010) to measure the inter-regional agglomeration of economic activity in Polish regions (at NUTS-4 level, districts). We check for the statistical significance of spatial autocorrelation measures in order to identify the clusters of tourism and KIS, as well as the scope and strength of spillovers effects with regards to the analysed variables. We also use contingency tables to study the relationship between tourism development and the localization of KIS providers in Polish districts.

We use the data collected by Polish Central Statistical Offices at the district level for 2009 and 2015, i.e. the number of enterprises registered in sections I and J of the NACE classification (the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community), reflecting, respectively, tourism supply (accommodation and food service activities) and KIS providers (information and communication services) as well as the number of tourists staying overnight in Polish districts. Additionally, we use the geostatistical information (GPS coordinates) of the enterprises (derived by geocoding their location on the basis of firms' addresses) in order to obtain the accuracy of the results in measuring the neighbourhood and determining the 'real' centres of tourism agglomeration in each district.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the literature on the spatial agglomeration of economic activity concerning the process of spatial concentration (clustering), results of agglomeration economies, and measures of the agglomeration phenomenon. It is followed by Section 3 that shows the impact of Knowledge-Intensive Services on regional innovation processes in the context of tourism destinations. In particular, we discuss how the spatial concentration of economic activity, spatial proximity, and spatial interdependence affect the regional innovativeness of territorial units. Section 4 describes the research procedure, methods, and data sources, both for measuring inter-regional agglomeration and spatial interrelation between KIS and tourism. Sections 5 and 6 present the research and results of both stages of the research procedure. The

final section concludes and shows further research directions.

Spatial Agglomeration of Business Activity: Process, Regional Effects, and Measures

Spatial agglomeration phenomenon refers to the concentration of businesses activities and the demand for services they provide in geographic space. Tourism is a spatial phenomenon that is particularly susceptible to concentration processes (Carreras, 1995; Yang, 2012; Sölvell, Ketels, & Lindqvist, 2008) as it is inseparable from tourism services, which means that customers mostly travel to places where the services are delivered (Vanhove, 2011, p. 12), although tourism often spreads beyond the borders of territorial units to neighboring regions (Majewska, 2015). This is a result of the spatial and functional interdependence of regions, as well as the external effects of agglomeration. In the literature, this is referred to as a geographic spillover effect (Yang & Wong, 2013; Yang & Fik, 2014), with reference to the phenomenon of knowledge diffusion, that can be defined as unintentional spatial interaction when the developmental processes, knowledge, productivity, innovations, etc. spread between neighboring regions. The existence and strength of spillovers are the evidence of the occurrence of functional ties between tourism firms located in neighbouring regions. Spillovers have a substantial impact on tourist agglomeration processes as positive spillover effects imply that the region can benefit from the tourism growth in the neighbouring regions. In fact, according to Marshall (1920), Hoover (1936), and Jacobs (1969), the basic premise of the spatial proximity and concentration of economic activity is that it can be beneficial due to agglomeration externalities to the overall economy as well as to sectors and firms clustered in a particular location (Prager & Thisse, 2012). This includes agglomeration externalities associated with the flow of knowledge or human resources (Ács, 2002, 2005), which is considered to stimulate regional innovation processes.

The positive agglomeration effects resulting from the concentration of economic activities are transmitted both within and between industries. In the literature two different main types of agglomeration

economies are distinguished: specialization (localization) and diversity (urbanization) externalities (Ács, 2005; Beaudry & Schiffauerova, 2009; Knoben, 2009). The localization economies usually take the form of Marshall-Arrow-Romer (MAR) externalities, which operate mainly within a specific industry. The localization economies are the advantages that firms in a single industry (or a set of closely related industries) gain from being placed in the same location. These promote positive externalities and thus economic growth within industries. The second type, the so-called Jacobs' externalities, work across sectors and stem from a local variety of producers (Jacobs, 1969); they refer to the so-called co-agglomeration, i.e. the tendency of different industries to be located near each other (Ellison, Glaeser, & Kerr, 2007; Kolko 2010). In Jacobs' (1969) view, it is the industrial diversity (heterogeneity) rather than specialization that is seen as the most significant regional growth factor (Ács, 2002). Thus, the urbanization economies are advantageous to firms, regardless of the sector, from being located together.

As the consequence of localized sources and the advantages of agglomeration, regional clusters, defined as the concentration of economic activity, emerge. They differ in regard to the scope and the scale of the spatial concentration of economic activity as well as spatial interdependencies with the neighbourhood. Additionally, according to recent literature, clustering and co-location tendencies differ per subsector (European Cluster Observatory, 2013).

The spatial concentration of economic agents itself does not necessarily involve strong linkages and interactions among them. Nonetheless, the probability of such ties increases with the growing number of agents and the decrease in the distance between them (Brodzicki & Kuczevska, 2012, p. 62).

There is evidence in the literature and different studies of the importance of spatial concentration of firms and spatial proximity in enhancing innovation (including regional innovation systems), productivity, diffusion of knowledge, formation of social and business networks and other positive agglomeration effects (Ács, 2002; Duranton & Puga, 2004; Asheim, & Gertler, 2004; Sørensen, 2007; Weidenfeld, Williams, & Butler, 2010; Prager & Thisse, 2012). The innova-

tion process is by its nature knowledge-intensive and, therefore (as knowledge transfer in spatially concentrated areas is vital to innovation), innovations rely to a large extent on the presence of knowledge-intensive services (KIS), including ICTs (CEET, n. d., p. 26).

It is often argued that innovation is created and sustained through a highly localized process as it clusters in areas where specialized inputs, services and resources (including competition, interactive learning or institutional conditions) necessary for the innovation process are concentrated (Asheim & Gertler, 2004; Wolfe, 2009). Additionally, inter-organizational interaction and related external knowledge are believed to support innovativeness (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Muller & Zenker, 2001).

Spatial agglomeration in a traditional approach refers to the concentration of businesses in the area enclosed within the administrative borders of territorial units for which statistics are collected. There are two main groups of measures of spatial agglomeration: cluster-based methods (e.g. the Gini index, Location Quotient, etc.) and distance-based methods. The number of the latter methods is still emerging in the literature (see e.g. Kopczewska, Churski, Ochojski, & Polko, 2015). While spatial agglomeration as well as its externalities spread beyond the boundaries of territorial units and spillover between neighbouring regions (districts or other administrative units), the studies on the phenomenon of spatial agglomeration in tourism and methods of its measuring must take into account its inter-regional dimension.

Such research has been recently undertaken by, among others, Yang and Wong (2012, 2013), Yang and Fik (2014), and Yang, Fik, and Zhang (2016), as well as Majewska (2015). All these authors have taken into account the spatial interdependence (spillover effects) in tourism. In particular, Yang, and Wong (2013) investigate the spatial distribution of foreign and domestic tourist inflows to cities in China and their growth rates using exploratory spatial data analysis (ESDA). Yang and Fik (2014) emphasize that spatial effects have largely been overlooked in the literature. Thus, in their research, they provide a tourism development analysis that considers spatial effects (*spillovers* and heterogeneity). Majewska (2015), in contrast, identifies ge-

ographic spillover effects in both localization-driven and urbanization-driven clusters in Poland and proposes to employ them to modify a cluster-mapping procedure with a spatially weighted location quotient (SWLQ). With the help of Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA), applying the local Moran's I_i statistic that belongs to the most common (within LISA) measures of spatial interdependence (autocorrelation) of spatial variables in neighboring regions (Anselin, 1995; Schabenberger & Gotway, 2005), she identifies and empirically measures interregional effects of spatial agglomeration in tourism considering the occurrence and strength of geographic spillover effects in Poland.

Regional Innovation Processes as Agglomeration Effect: The Role of KIS Providers in Tourism Destinations

The knowledge-based and rapidly changing economy redefines the ability of regions, including tourism destinations, and enterprises to prosper in the contemporary world. While the production of goods and services is becoming more knowledge intensive in response to market demand and also rapid development of so-called 'creative industries,' which are merging with other industries such as tourism (European Cluster Observatory, 2013), innovation process is based on the creative use of various forms of knowledge (Alves, 2007). In this way, regional innovations are largely dependent on the occurrence of knowledge-intensive services (KIS) in a given area.

KIS are defined as services that involve economic activities which are intended to result in the creation, accumulation, or dissemination of knowledge. Thus, the existence of a spatial association between regions (inter-regional agglomeration) with regards to the share of KIS providers in total economic activity can be perceived as reflecting knowledge spillovers in the regions. Based on the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE), the service sector is divided into knowledge-intensive services and less knowledge-intensive services according to the approach relying on classifying production and services based on their R&D intensity (expenditure on R&D to value added ratio). The follow-

ing sectors of NACE are included into KIS: Post and Telecommunications, Computer Science, Research and Development, Water Transport, Aviation, Real Estate, Rental of machinery and equipment, Financial intermediation, Education, Healthcare and Social Assistance, as well as Other business activities, including Cultural Activities, Recreation and Sport. The latter sub-group is a part of tourism business services which are mainly classified as less knowledge-intensive. However, in urban tourism destinations, providers of tourism business services often co-exist with KIS providers (Majewska & Truskolaski, 2011, 2012). A significant subgroup of knowledge-intensive services is called high-tech KIS, which group includes Post and Telecommunications, Computer Science, Research and Development. Computer Science (division 62 of section J within NACE, i.e. computer programming, and consultancy) can be identified as ICT services.

KIS providers play a special role in innovation systems, and therefore in enhancing regional innovativeness. They serve as sources of innovations (initiating and developing innovation activities in client organizations), facilitators of innovations (supporting the innovation process of an organization) and as carriers of innovations (aiding in transferring existing knowledge so that it can be applied in a new context) (Miles et al., 1995). Thus, using KIS enables firms to conduct their own innovative activities.

A strong preference for locally provided services with regards to the location of KIS-related providers, observed in previous studies (OECD, 2006), supports the importance of geographical proximity and the development of clusters and networks in strengthening the innovative system in which the firms operate (Ács, 2002). It is noteworthy that tourism generates demand for KIS including ICT services (e.g. online ticket booking platforms for museums) as well as constituting a source of KIS itself (Kahle, 2002).

A tourism destination can be perceived as a set of competences and knowledge of key importance to the development of products and services (Hjalager, 2010). Some studies indicate that tourism areas are characterized by the occurrence of a crucial, intersectoral knowledge, essential for innovation (Bieger &

Weinert, 2006). It should be noted that tourism destinations concentrate interlinked companies and institutions of the broadly-defined tourism industry within their areas. In this way, they create favourable conditions for the emergence of product and process innovations. Geographical neighbourhood, mutual relations between economic entities and organizations, as well as network links are in this case necessary means of diffusion of knowledge and information within tourism destinations (Nordin, 2003; Porter, 2000).

Innovative entrepreneurship in tourism can also be analysed in the context of the concept of tourism area lifecycle (TALC) (Butler, 1980). Mature tourism destinations are under constant pressure to introduce strategies of rejuvenation and re-orientation, employing various categories of innovation. However, the pressure towards implementation of re-orientation strategy also concerns some 'new' emerging tourism destinations (Weber & Tomljenović, 2004; Mueller, Peters, & Blanco, 2010). Such a strategy usually calls for new forms of partnership in the tourism destination both within and outside the tourism sector; tourism businesses must operate more efficiently. This may lead to the intensification of KIS in a given area, as they are used in innovative processes in tourism.

Research Procedure, Methods, and Data Sources: Measuring Inter-Regional Agglomeration and spatial interrelation between KIS and Tourism

The research procedure is based on two main stages. First, we measure the occurrence of inter-regional spatial concentration, i.e. the agglomeration phenomenon, including spillover effects, using spatial statistics of autocorrelation (Anselin, 1995, 2010; Kopczewska, 2011; Páez & Scott, 2004; Schabenberger & Gotway, 2005) within exploratory spatial data analysis (ESDA). In particular, we apply local Moran's I_i statistic, as one of the most common used measures of spatial interdependence (autocorrelation) within Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA).

Within the second stage of the research procedure, we assess the relations between two properties of Polish districts: (1) the occurrence of KIS providers, (2) the intensity and dynamics (i.e. development stage) of the tourism development in a given area with the

use of variables based on data collected by the Polish Central Statistical Office. The occurrence of KIS is measured as the share of business activities registered in section J within NACE classification ('information and communication services') in the general structure of total business activities in a given district in 2015. Tourism development is described by a number of tourists staying overnight in each district in 2015.

Local Moran's I_i statistic is a weighted correlation coefficient used for the detection of deviations with spatial characteristics in the random distribution of the variable X . It enables the determination of whether neighbouring areas are more similar to each other (in terms of variable X), than would result from the stochastic nature of the phenomenon (Mora & Moreno, 2010). Moran's I_i statistic is expressed by the following formula (Anselin, 1995; Schabenberger & Gotway, 2005, p. 24):

$$I_i = \frac{(x_i - \bar{x}) \sum_{j=1}^n w_{ij}(x_j - \bar{x})}{\sum_{j=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 / n}, \quad (1)$$

where $x_i(x_j)$ is the value of the variable X in the region $i(j)$, n is the number of regions, \bar{x} is the arithmetic mean of the variable X , and w_{ij} are the elements of the spatial weights matrix W between units i and j .

Local Moran's I_i statistic is based on a neighbourhood matrix (spatial lag operators W). The spatial weights matrix W is simply a matrix ($n \times n$) containing weights w_{ij} that describe the degree of spatial relatedness (i.e. contiguity, proximity and/or connectivity) between units of analysis i and j (Páez & Scott, 2004). There are different ways of defining the neighbourhood and building spatial weights matrices (Griffith, 1996; Páez & Scott, 2004), but there is no consensus about the operationalization of the neighbourhood construct (Grady & Enander, 2009; Riva, Apparicio, Gauvin, & Brodeur, 2008). These methods depend, inter alia, on the purpose of the study, the degree of knowledge of the area studied and its geographic conditions, and weighting function used (Haining, 2010; Chen, 2012; Timmins, Hunter, Cattet, & Stenhouse, 2013). One basic definitions is based on physical contiguity with binary weights that assign a weight of 1 to pairs of territorial units sharing a border and 0 otherwise. Alternatively, connectivity can be given in terms

of travel time between pairs of origins and destinations as well as proximity that can be defined in terms of distance or other generalized costs (Páez & Scott, 2004, p. 55).

The rules of the neighbourhood used in the local Moran statistics (and other indicators of spatial association) often operate on the distance between the centroids of adjacent territorial units (Anselin, 1995; Schabenberger & Gotway, 2005; Lloyd, 2010). Then the neighbours are regions where the distance between the centroids of districts, that is, their geometric centres, regional capitals, centres designated on the basis of location data of economic activity (GPS coordinates of spatially localized firms), etc. does not exceed a specified number d of km. In this study, for measuring the neighbourhood and spatial autocorrelation, we use central tendencies of the localization of enterprises (mean GPS coordinates for each Polish district) as centres of tourism agglomerations, as proposed in the previous study of Majewska (2015), as well as centroids of districts (for KIS providers). We use the GPS coordinates of enterprises set in the CSO database on individual firms registered in section I of NACE classification within 'accommodation and food service activities' ($N = 131338$) located in 380 Polish districts in 2015.

Assuming that the intensity and dynamic of tourism development in a given area can be seen as indicators of stages within the Tourism Area Life Cycle (Butler 1980), we can verify whether the occurrence of KIS providers and tourist activity in a given area is linked to the phase of this area's tourism development. Thereby, we apply a contingency table of two categorical variables according to the character of the tourism destination's development ('stages') and the share of KIS in total business activity in the districts and check if there is a statistically significant relationship, i.e. if and how districts differentiate with respect to both characteristics. Tested is the zero-hypothesis, which states that both variables are independent (categories of one variable are distributed uniformly across the categories of the second variable) (Veal, 2006). A Chi-square test is produced, and the contingency coefficient C is determined in order to test whether there is any relationship between the two variables involved

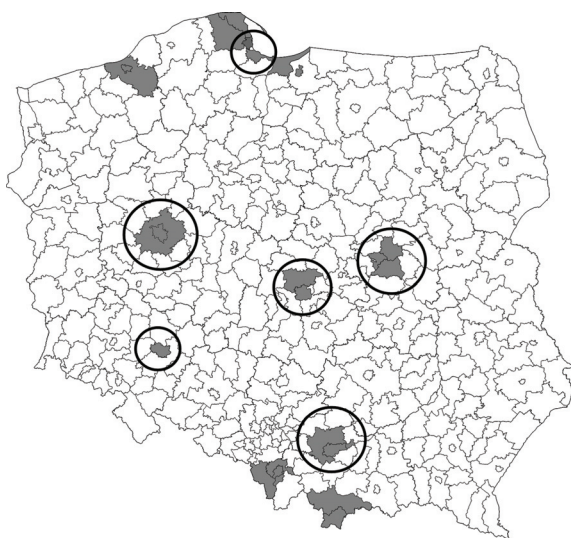


Figure 1 Significant Local Moran's I_i Statistics in Relation to the Share of Section I (Accommodation and Food Service Activities) in the Total Number of Firms in Polish Districts in 2015 ($p < 0.01$) (based on Central Statistical Office data with the use of PQstat software)

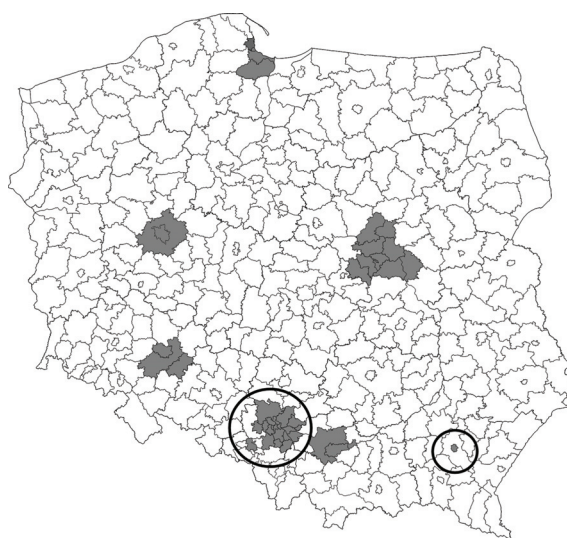


Figure 2 Significant Local Moran's I_i Statistics in Relation to the Share of Section J (Information and Communication) in the Total Number of Firms in Polish Districts in 2015 ($p < 0.01$) (based on Central Statistical Office data with the use of PQstat software)

and whether the overall differences are statistically significant.

First, we define a district classification map (a typology matrix based on a character of districts' development as tourism destinations) placing the data on the intensity of tourism development (the number of tourists staying overnight) and the rate of its change in the 2-dimensional matrix (see Gołembski, 2011). Doing so, we can distinguish mature tourism destinations (characterized by high and stable numbers of tourists staying overnight as well as destinations with different dynamics reflecting stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation) or new, emerging tourism destinations (low or medium level of tourist function intensity and high dynamics).

Inter-Regional Agglomeration of Tourism Supply and KIS Providers in Polish Regions

Within the first stage of the research procedure, we identify statistically significant clusters of neighboring districts in Poland similar to each other by the high values of the variables: (1) the share of section I in total number of firms registered in districts (inter-

regional tourism supply agglomerations) – Figure 1 and Figure 2) the share of section J in the total number of firms registered in districts (inter-regional KIS providers agglomerations) (Figure 2).

Figure 1 and Figure 2 present the results of spatial autocorrelation statistics, Moran's local I_i , obtained using PQstat software. The neighbourhood matrices were defined by the radius of the distance d between the centres of districts ($d = 25$ km). They were set as central tendencies, i.e. the average value of GPS coordinates of enterprises of section I located in each district in Poland (Figure 1) and as geometric means (centroids) of districts (Figure 2).

We observe statistically significant spillover effects in tourism supply in both urbanization- and localization-type clusters (identified on the coast in the northern part of Poland and mountain region in the south). Urbanization-type agglomerations are marked with circles on the map (Figure 1) and those are agglomerations of Warsaw (in central-east part of Poland), Łódź (in the central part), Poznań (central-west), Wrocław (southwest), Krakow (south), and Tricity (north). Almost all of them (5 of 6 – excluding

Łódź agglomeration) are also identified as clusters of KIS providers (Figure 2). Therefore, we can observe, at least to a certain degree, agglomeration convergence processes in urbanized Polish regions in relation to tourism and clusters of KIS providers.

With regard to KIS providers, we can identify two additional agglomerations (marked by circles on Figure 2) comparing tourism clusters, namely: the Silesian conurbation, which is a large industrial region in the south of Poland and Rzeszów agglomeration (south-east), a so-called 'aviation valley' with a strong and well developed KIS-intensive aviation industry. Moreover, the spillover effects are generally stronger with regards to section J (average value of local Moran's I_i statistic for all districts equals 0.76 compared to 0.59 in the case of section I). In particular this can be seen the case of the Warsaw, Wrocław, and Gdańsk agglomerations.

Taking into consideration the spatial interrelatedness of tourism and KIS providers, we can further investigate the observed relationship in different types of tourism destinations (apart from distinguishing between urbanization- and localization-type regions) identified by tourism intensity and its dynamics (stages of the tourist areas' development).

Relations between Regional Tourist Development and KIS Providers' Localization in Polish Districts

Within the second stage of the research procedure, we analyse the relationship between regional tourism development (the phase of tourism development reflected by the level of tourism development intensity and its dynamics) and KIS providers' localization. The former was measured by the logarithmized number of tourists staying overnight, while the latter by the share of firms registered in section J in total business activity in districts. For this purpose, a cross-tabulation was produced; the results are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Statistically, significant relations between the stage of tourism area lifecycle and the fraction of KIS in total business activity in districts in 2015 can be confirmed (the value of Pearson chi-square distribution was 44.935 at the significance level of $p = 0.000$).

It can be concluded that the high and medium-high percentages of KIS in total services is most of-

ten found in districts with the highest growth rate of tourism (29.17% and 30.56% of districts at the 'dynamic growth' stage of tourism development), as opposed to units with low rates of growth or decreased of tourism (only 12.73% and 5.42% of tourism destination with, respectively, medium-low and low level of tourism development are, at the same time, characterized by the high percentage of KIS). Within the group of districts share of KIS providers in the local economy is the highest, the largest group (42%) are districts at dynamic growth and a medium-high level of tourism intensity.

Over 40 per cent of districts with the highest intensity of tourist development (mature tourism destinations) is characterized by the low share of KIS in their economic activities. However, it should be noted that another group of such districts (25%) is characterized by a medium-high share of KIS or even a high share of KIS (18.75% of mature tourism destinations). This is a result of different types of tourist agglomerations in mature tourism destinations: the urbanized and the localized type; the latter type is mostly connected with monoculture development of tourism based on natural attractiveness and low levels of KIS. Districts at the beginning of tourism development or in the decrease stage in terms of tourism development are much less likely to be characterized by a high percentage of KIS than might be expected from the equal distribution.

Conclusions and Discussion, Further Research

The study aimed to investigate spatial agglomeration processes and interrelations between KIS and tourism in Polish regions (at NUTS-4 level, districts). We applied a two-stage research procedure. First, we tested the spatial autocorrelation of neighbouring Polish districts with regards to variables on tourism and KIS providers' measures. The methodology, based on local statistics of spatial association and GPS coordinates of firms' localization, allowed us to model agglomeration processes and assess their strength and scope. As the main implication of the study, we identified a number of inter-regional agglomerations considering tourism supply and KIS providers. We observe statistically significant spatial spillover effects of agglomeration in both urbanization- and localization-type

Table 1 The Relationships between Intensity of KIS Providers in a District and Its Phase of Tourism Development in 2015: Percentage of Rows

Category	Share of KIS (section J – information and communication)*			
	High	Medium-high	Medium-low	Low
Mature tourist destinations (high level, stability)	18.75	25.00	15.63	40.63
Dynamic growth (medium-high level)	29.17	30.56	29.17	11.11
Decrease or stability (medium level)	12.73	24.55	30.91	31.82
Decrease or stability (low level)	5.42	17.47	35.54	41.57

Notes * In total business activity in districts. Based on Central Statistical Office data with the use of PQstat software.

Table 2 The Relationships between Intensity of KIS Providers in a District and Its Phase of Tourism Development in 2015: Percentage of Columns

Category	Share of KIS (section J – information and communication)*			
	High	Medium-high	Medium-low	Low
Mature tourist destinations (high level, stability)	12	9.30	4.20	10.40
Dynamic growth (medium-high level)	42.00	25.58	17.65	6.40
Decrease or stability (medium level)	28.00	31.40	28.57	28.00
Decrease or stability (low level)	18.00	33.72	49.58	55.20

Notes * In total business activity in districts. Based on Central Statistical Office data with the use of PQstat software.

clusters as well as convergence processes of tourism and KIS clusters in urbanized regions.

Within the second part of the research, we conclude that there is a positive correlation between the share of KIS providers in districts' economies and tourist destinations at the dynamic stage of tourism development. Moreover, we find that mature tourism destinations are characterized by both low and high intensity of KIS, depending on the type of clusters (urbanized vs. localized). However, the highest percentage of districts with high dynamics of tourist development refers to the medium and high share of KIS providers.

The results indicate the need for an in-depth investigation of the role of KIS providers in the regional development processes in tourism, in the case of new tourism destinations or of mature tourism destinations that are under the pressure of looking for new development impulses (rejuvenation strategies). It seems to be of particular importance to take into consideration the growing need for the creative use of various forms of knowledge in regional innovation processes as well as the rapid development of creative industries which are merging with the tourism in-

dustry. Thus, further research should also concentrate on verifying the collaboration on innovations between KIS providers and other local firms in regions at different stages of tourism development. A question arises of whether such collaboration enhances regional innovativeness. What role in the emergence of new tourism destinations and innovation-based re-orientation of traditional tourism areas is played by knowledge-based services? In particular, what role in these processes can be attributed to collaboration between firms on introducing product and process innovations? This is a subject for further studies of the relations between KIS (ICT) and tourism from a business perspective.

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Multi-Channel Funding of Social Tourism Programs: The Case of the Association of Friends of Youth

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Introduction

Social tourism is not yet a well-known or well-understood concept in tourism studies or across large sections of the tourism industry (Minnaert, Diekmann, & McCabe, 2012). It essentially refers to initiatives that aim to include groups into tourism that would otherwise be excluded (Minnaert, 2014) or, in other words, social tourism is defined as ‘helping people travel who would not otherwise be able to do so’ (European Commission, 2010, p. 2). The leading authors and researchers of the social sustainability, Minnaert, Maitland, and Miller (2013, p. 16), claim that ‘social tourism research is still at a relatively early stage, and further research is needed before ‘scientification’ of the concept can take place.’ They propose defining social tourism as ‘tourism with added moral value, of which the primary aim is to benefit either the host or the visitor in the tourism exchange.’

Since the definition of social tourism remains a work-in-progress, it is understandable that different interpretations and models of social tourism have been introduced; these models represent various facets of social tourism as it exists today and provide the rationale for these interpretations. Uncertainties also exist regarding who the beneficiaries of social tourism are. Although four principal target groups in the European context were recognized by the Calypso project (European Commission, 2010) (young people, persons with disabilities, senior citizens and families) there are still a number of groups in contemporary society who are excluded from tourism (Diekmann, McCabe, & Minnaert, 2012; Diekmann & McCabe, 2013). Therefore, social tourism not only seeks to address economically disadvantaged individuals but also aims to address a whole range of societal phenomena affecting different groups in society (Diekmann & Mc-

Cabe, 2013, p. 26). Social tourism initiatives/products are also very diverse and, in various European countries, are oriented towards different groups in society. According to Minnaert (2014, p. 283), the concept of social tourism has been implemented in different ways, primarily to suit national contexts: several countries operate holiday voucher programs (for example France and Hungary), other countries have established public-private partnerships (for example Spain, Portugal and Flanders, Belgium), while in the UK and the USA, social tourism is traditionally not a part of public policy and is mostly provided via charities. It is also clear that social tourism provides economic and social benefits (European Economic and Social Committee, 2006). Economic benefits, including increased employment, reduced tourism seasonality and greater economic activity and growth, are becoming widely recognized by the tourism industry (European Commission, 2010). Furthermore, numerous social benefits (Griffin & Stacey, 2013; Tourism Flanders & Brussels, 2008; McCabe 2009; Minnaert, Maitland, & Miller, 2009; Sedgley, Pritchard, & Morgan 2012; McCabe, Joldersma, & Li, 2010; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Gabruč, 2014b, 2015) are recognized and presented in terms of different improvements in the lives of beneficiaries and also as benefits to the wider society: social tourism increases social cohesion, quality of life and general public welfare as it increases social and family capital, reduces social inequalities, and promotes social inclusion.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable and dramatic increase in research on social tourism in the European context (McCabe, 2009; Minnaert, Maitland, & Miller, 2006; Sedgley, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2012; McCabe, Minnaert, & Diekmann, 2012; Minnaert, 2014); several studies on the emergence of so-

cial tourism and programs of social tourism (Gabruč, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Bizjak, Knežević, & Cvetrežnik, 2011) already exist in Slovenia. Nevertheless, there are some outstanding fundamental questions on what social tourism is, what forms/practices it includes, and who the beneficiaries are (Minnaert et al., 2013; Diekmann & McCabe, 2013).

The central assumption of our research is that due to poor knowledge of the social tourism phenomenon it is consequently very difficult to identify existing social tourism programs and their particular funding characteristics. The aim of this research is twofold: first, to prepare the literature review on social tourism funding, and second, to explore how the funding of social tourism programs is organized and conducted by The Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (AFY). An exploratory, qualitative study was carried out: in an interview with a representative of the organization and in documentary material, youth summer holiday programs and their funding system were explored.

Literature Review: Funding of Social Tourism

As the aims and goals of social tourism are primarily non-commercial, it is often defined in contrast to commercial tourism (Diekmann & McCabe, 2013, p. 21), for which making a profit is the central goal. Through the understanding of social tourism as a generator and promotor of socio-economic benefits, its 'social character' is revealed, and the foundation for public funding has been laid.

According to Diekmann and McCabe (2013), for social tourism to work there needs to be a system to deliver funds; without those, social tourism as a phenomenon is virtually impossible. In their research, Minnaert et al. (2013) addressed the question of why social tourism was supported by public funding in some societies, but not so in others. They report that in countries like France, Belgium, Portugal and Spain the public sector is a major stakeholder in social tourism provision, whereas in other countries, like the United Kingdom and Ireland, public sector support for social tourism policies is all but non-existent; social tourism is primarily understood as a luxury; consequently, social tourism initiatives usually are not a part of social and/or health policies. Nevertheless, the concept of so-

cial tourism is often supported by public funding and mostly takes the form of low-cost domestic holidays (Minnaert et al., 2009, p. 317).

Diekmann et al. (2012, p. 38) emphasize the presence and importance of funding structures to support social tourism, where funding structures can address specific target groups of social tourism, according to the interpretation of social tourism in each country. Their research points out that funding mechanisms are highly complex and multi-layered, consisting of: (1) direct state funding at diverse political levels (local, regional, national and supranational) and, at the national level, depending on different ministerial portfolios as well as the degree of integration of tourism within state welfare policies; (2) indirect state funding, through health insurance or charities; (3) trade unions or social tourism organizations; and (4) self-financed charities and faith organizations. The authors report that these funding mechanisms are directed towards the support of one or more target groups, often to achieve specific outcomes (benefits) for those groups.

According to Diekmann and McCabe (2013, p. 25), two major types of funding can be observed: infrastructure-oriented funding and beneficiary-oriented funding. Their research reveals the major distinction is between direct and indirect state funding with one exception being the UK, where social tourism is primarily organized by a third sector, charities, who receive the majority of their funding via individual donations, the tourism industry and income from trusts or through events. The research also reports that in other countries social tourism is funded directly by the state (or region), this is delivered through a ministry grant either to beneficiaries or suppliers. The authors emphasize that in terms of indirect funding, the state subsidizes unions or health and welfare organizations.

Caire (2012, p. 85) emphasizes that the trend in funding has moved from financial aid for construction to financial aid to individuals, as a result of the substantial decrease in subsidies granted to social tourism. He claims that rather than subsidizing the construction of social tourism facilities, the public sector grants financial support directly to the holiday-maker; the beneficiary can then choose to spend mo-

ney on social tourism or in the commercial sector, and, as an example, a holiday voucher program is presented. According to the study, holiday vouchers can be used with registered transport, accommodation, or leisure companies.

As previously mentioned, systems of national or regional social tourism are substantially dependent on funding mechanisms (Diekmann et al., 2012). Research emphasizes that even with the multitude of funding mechanisms, three main delivery systems can be distinguished (specific accommodation facilities, holiday vouchers and charitable funding for disadvantaged individuals), although many countries combine more than one system. The research reports organizations owning specific accommodation facilities available for their members that distinguish themselves from commercial suppliers because their main aim is not profit but welfare, which is a core element of all policies and activities. On holiday vouchers, the study mentions that most countries allow the consumer to use commercial tourism infrastructures and are available to employees as a kind of tax-free bonus: in France, holiday vouchers are combined with specific accommodation facilities. Charitable funding for disadvantaged individuals, according to the same research, relies on charities, which can be directly or indirectly subsidized by the government and which may use commercial supply for holiday provision.

McCabe et al. (2012) claim that social tourism is inevitably reliant on some form of stimulus funding, often provided by the state or the public sector, due to the financial downturn in recent years and public sector spending coming under increased scrutiny. According to Diekmann and McCabe (2013), the degree of public funding given to social tourism is one defining aspect that has been largely overlooked. They report that a range of different funding mechanisms has been discussed, from direct state aid, funding via membership organizations, charitable funding, as well as the Danish system, where funding is provided through interest accruing on paid vouchers. The study emphasizes that funding is moving away from investment in physical resources and towards stimulus for collaborative or partnership programs, in a (more) pluralistic model. The study also highlights that it is imperative

for the public sector to develop innovative approaches to funding to ensure that social tourism is not dependent on vulnerable sources of funding and that the justification for such funding is not solely evidenced by benefits to health and social welfare, but also by the added value to the national/regional economy. The study points out that collaborative public-private funding partnerships demonstrate cost-effective solutions. In the case of Hungary (Puczkó & Rátz, 2013), welfare tourism operators exploring additional revenue opportunities were surprised that the ratio of 'other revenues' (such as commercial accommodation services, meetings, and events) within social tourism increased from 11% to 48% between 1978 and 1987.

The study examines different AFY summer holiday programs and their system/characteristics of funding. More specifically, the objectives of the study were as follows: (i) to identify the main channels/mechanisms of funding, and (ii) to identify how funding is carried out according to different types of funding (Is funding more infrastructure- or beneficiary-oriented?) and to examine the scope of funding and the funding trends.

Methodology

Because the concept of social tourism initiatives/programs in Slovenia is poorly known and poorly understood, it was difficult to access providers of social tourism or to identify various social tourism programs. The creation of a representative sample is therefore based on a (virtually) impossible foundation because the relevant information is not available through any registry/list of social tourism providers from which to create a sample and secondly, because there are (according to the numerous and different interpretations of social tourism) many uncertainties in relation to what social tourism programs are. Due to the limitations presented, we decided on qualitative research conducted using the principles and procedures of qualitative analysis (Mesec, 1998).

The selected social tourism provider (AFY) and available information on it was accessed for the first phase (in September 2014) and reviewed over the Internet; through the second phase (October and November 2014), we undertook short informative telephone

interviews with a representative of the organization, where we presented the purpose of our study and established contacts with the organization, which was the entry point (Mesec, 1998, p. 74). She was asked to participate in the research and also to briefly describe their activities with emphasis on their social tourism programs or holiday programs. We requested additional written material relating to the holiday programs they offer. The following January, the AFY representative was invited to take part in a roundtable event, where an interview with her was carried out.

For the data collection (1) an interview with the AFY representative was conducted (in the context of roundtable event) and (2) written material and available documentation about the organization was collected (i.e. Booklet of the AFY Anniversary) (Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije, 2013). Both documents were later analysed and processed according to qualitative analysis methodologies; textual records were broken down into topics: topics renamed in terms of everyday language, research topics renamed by encoding, the key concepts were then selected and relationships between them were defined, and finally a tentative theory was formed (Mesec, 1998, pp. 350–377); the data were coded inductively and analysed thematically. Most of the codes were attributed on the basis of the literature review. To maximize the respondent's voice in the research and to answer the research questions as much as possible from the respondent's point of view, quotes will be used extensively. In that way, a clear distinction between the researcher's and the respondents' interpretations is made.

Funding Holiday Programs at AFY

As mentioned earlier, the goals of the study are to examine different AFY summer holiday programs for children and their system of funding. The starting points/questions for our research were what the main channels or mechanisms of funding are, how it is carried out according to different types of funding (infrastructure-oriented or beneficiary-oriented funding), and what is the scope of funding and the funding trends.

The study of children's holiday programs in AFY reveals mainly non-commercial targets (in particular,

related to increasing social inclusion for children and for greater social cohesion), which represent an essential foundation not only for public funding but also for charity fundraising, as we see from examples below. The example below emphasizes that the type of funding in no way determine the holiday program of the children and in that respect, all the children are equal regardless of the different channels of funding.

With regards to AFY holiday programs, there is a double maxim: first making holidays available to all children and, secondly, the same holiday for all children. [AFY representative]

When the kids are at the resort, they receive all the same services, the same program, regardless of how it is financed or how those services are covered. [AFY representative]

The aforementioned social goals and aims of children summer holiday programs also reflect the status of AFY, which is a non-governmental, voluntary, humanitarian and non-profit organization. Because of its activities, it has also gained the status of organizations in the public interest. This different status allows the organization to obtain funding from various sources to finance holiday programs.

Funding is channelled in many directions [...] Children's holiday programs are funded from various sources: The Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (HIIS), the Foundation for the Funding of Invalid Humanitarian Organizations (FIHO), a significant proportion from parents, a large proportion from local community contributions, and also from campaigns – humanitarian and others – organized to raise funds from various sponsors and donors. [AFY representative]

In the AFY case, as we see from the example above, the funding of holiday programs normally and in a significant proportion passes directly to the users themselves: the parents of these children. Other funding mechanisms include direct funding at the local level – local community funds – as well as indirect state fund-

ing through health insurance and the FIHO. One of the important mechanism for funding is also through the self-financed charities via humanitarian and donor campaigns, which usually take place in partnership with other (profit-based) organizations, as we will see from examples below.

The response below is an example of the two different ways of funding that are carried out at AFY; running in parallel are both resort-infrastructure funding and the funding of the holiday programs themselves. AFY warns that the greatest threat to the existence of their holiday programs is a lack of funding for both infrastructure funding and the funding of programs/beneficiary-oriented funding.

The biggest problem is of a financial nature (for renovation and modernization, as well as the cost of holiday programs) – municipalities spend less money on it each year. [AFY document]

It is clear that the reduced amount of financial resources earmarked for infrastructure represents a particular problem for AFY. This is mainly because the organization itself must provide funding for resort maintenance; also, it requires financial resources to pay operating costs. Since AFY owns numerous resorts, this is a very challenging task for the organization.

AFY owns or operates 16 resorts with a combined total of 2,275 beds, and most resorts have the status of youth hostels – most of them in Croatia, running as corporations or institutions. [AFY document]

To gather necessary funds for financing the infrastructure and to pay operational costs, AFY has developed a diverse set of special programs, which usually take place during the low season, in cooperation with external contractors and organizers; these special programs have little in common with the summer holiday programs. The primary aim is, as mentioned before, to obtain the necessary funds for the infrastructure by offering it for rent to external contractors; these programs are undoubtedly important in terms of users/beneficiaries, but their primary aim is in terms of 'survival' for program providers, in that

case, AFY, seeking to reduce the impact of seasonality on their business or maintain employment and 'pay the bills.' Funds raised in that way (through special programs and with external contractors) represent an additional, second channel of infrastructure-oriented funding. The example below shows the variety of programs that AFY runs in the low season.

Happy English vacation or various foreign language courses; sailing school, and school for asthma sufferers; implementing science and project days; during pre-out-of-season and post-out-of-season there are other programs such as Nature school, Gold reader's badge reward holidays; extracurricular activities, camps, workshops, sports team preparations; youth workshops, tennis school, swimming school, travel workshops and creative workshops, etc. [AFY document]

In relation to the funding of the holiday programs themselves (i.e. beneficiary-oriented funding), AFY provides a variety of holiday program financing schemes that focus on specific target groups of children, for example, children with health problems, children with special needs, and children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Humanitarian initiatives provide an annual average of more than 1,000 free children's holiday program places, with several thousand children able to obtain funding for subsidized holidays through local communities and the Institute of Public Health. [...] Holiday programs for children with special needs are mainly funded by the FIHO Foundation and the program includes between 100 and 150 children each year. [AFY document]

As we see from the example above, most of the presented channels of funding are beneficiary-oriented: only local community funds are directed to both the beneficiaries and infrastructure, as mentioned above, where the municipalities' contributions and infrastructure oriented funding was examined.

However, the dominant mechanism of funding holiday programs is a financial contribution from the

parents of these children, and the proportion of parents who can pay the full cost of the program decreases; this indicates a trend that the volume of funds from this channel decreases.

Nowadays only 30 per cent of parents can pay the full cost of the holiday program. [...] The organization is particularly concerned that all children be able to take part in holidays and leisure activities irrespective of their social status. [AFY representative]

In the past and also today, as we can see from the examples above and below, AFY has taken care to ensure that the children's holiday program are 'socially sensitive' and (co)funded from different channels/funding mechanisms that allow the participation in holidays for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

In the past, for holidays organized by AFY, 30–50 per cent was financed by parents, 24 per cent from WSIG (Worker self-managed interest group) child care, 21 per cent from the WSIG health and social care, and 15 per cent from WSIG welfare. [AFY document]

AFY has the status of the humanitarian organization, which means that part of the funds for implementing holiday programs is obtained from 'humanitarian initiatives' by which donations and sponsorships at the local and national levels are received. According to the AFY documents, an important feature of the funding of holiday programs is, therefore, the solidarity that comes about through the various humanitarian activities (e.g. Wink at the Sun, We Were All Kids, Compassionate Snowflake). With the help of selected donations and sponsorship funds, AFY funded holiday program places for children from disadvantaged families. AFY usually organizes the campaigns in partnership with commercial organizations and in that way public-private partnerships are formed which, as a trend, are noticeable also in the broader European setting (McCabe et al., 2012).

The largest contributions to free holiday program places for children from socially disad-

vantaged environments are received from the annual Wink at the Sun campaign. [...] At the end of the 1990s, AFY's charitable activities skyrocketed [...] through its partnership with the Lek pharmaceutical company, the Wink at the Sun campaign began. [AFY document]

According to the AFY documents, another very successful charity campaign was also launched as the public-private partnership between the AFY and two commercial organizations: Pejo trading and Mercator.

Money for free holiday programs is also provided by other charitable initiatives, and among the most successful has been 'We were all Kids.' The campaign was supported by the Pejo trading company and provided one-week holiday program places for 1,500 children: 100 per year during the winter holidays and 200 per year in the summer holidays. The campaign ran from 2003 to 2007, also in cooperation with Mercator, which contributed a part from the sale of certain products. [AFY document]

In relation to the campaign 'Wink at the Sun,' another fundraising mechanism was launched to reach individual donors, again in partnership with a newspaper company.

In 1998, AFY launched the difficult and, at the same time, risky concept of fundraising through direct marketing using unaddressed letters with payment slips sent to all households in Slovenia; due to the high costs, this action was subsequently limited to legal entities and individual donors, who received mailshot and payment slips, delivered with daily newspapers. [...] To date, more than €1.8 million has been raised, with free holiday program places going to 10,500 children. [AFY document]

Firstly, the examples above all reveal that the humanitarian activity of AFY is growing and becoming increasingly necessary and in parallel with local community contributions and FIHO and HHS funds annually ensures a substantial part of the funds in the funding system of children summer holiday program

at AFY. Secondly, all the examples above indicate that funding is aimed more towards providing financial assistance for users/beneficiaries and less for infrastructure funding.

In a context of beneficiary-oriented funding, the responses above shows that the scope of the funds raised from charity campaigns rises from year to year: from 300 children on free holidays in 2003–2007 to more than 1000 children in 2013, in addition to several thousand children having subsidized holidays from municipalities. This information is also supported by the fact that fewer and fewer parents can afford an annual holiday for their children, and that the scope of available financial resources from parents is diminishing. The tendency of the AFY to also include children with health problems and disabled children makes the organization a candidate for FIHO in HIIS funds. There has been a reduction in funding from both of these channels; FIHO funds due to the concession fee reduction from the lottery, while HIIS funds due to a tightening of the criteria for children to access holiday program places and consequently a reduction in funding from this source. Regarding the infrastructure-oriented funding, research shows reduced funding from the municipalities, which has increased the scope of the funds that must be ensured by AFY itself.

The funding system of AFY, including beneficiary and infrastructure funds, is highly complex and multi-layered and, as such, today enables a relatively high proportion of children to take part in holiday programs:

On average, around 20,000 children benefit from holiday programs annually. [AFY document]

However, as the examples show, the total volume of the gathered funds is in decline, and consequently we can expect that the number of children benefiting from the AFY summer programs financial schemes will decrease in the future, but hopefully not significantly since the organization has developed a multi-channelled funding system, which should prevent such a negative outcome for the children summer holiday programs.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the insight of funding in the field of social tourism. Significant findings of the research were that multi-channel funding system in AFY exists, which is an exceptional case of social tourism funding, not only in Slovenia but also in the wider European context and, as such, is potentially a good funding practice, which should be promoted. The AFY multi-channelled system consists of six different channels of funding children's summer holiday programs. In the context of public funding, there are three different channels; in addition to the FIHO and HIIS funds designated for funding summer holiday programs for children with special needs and children with health problems (children's summer programs funded from these two channels are fully covered), there are also community contributions, which are primarily used for (co)funding summer holiday programs for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (municipalities allocate another part of these funds for the investments in infrastructure of the holiday resorts). The fourth channel is charity fundraising and funds from which the organization covers the full costs of summer holiday programs for more than a thousand children per year. The last and very significant channel of funding children's holiday programs are parents' contributions; their own funds represent a primary channel for funding the programs, which are usually (co)funded due to the increasingly unfavourable socio-economic status of many Slovenian families.

Another significant finding was that the system of fundraising is strongly linked to the status of the organization, and it represents an essential foundation for raising funds in the presented ways from various organizations and individuals, not only from parents but also from individual donors. Only two channels of infrastructure-oriented funding exist: community funds and the funds of the AFY organization obtained through launching special products, usually in the low season and in cooperation with outside contractors.

According to our research question about how the funding is carried out according to different types of funding and what is the scope of funding and the funding trends the research shows that two major

types of funding can be observed: running in parallel are infrastructure-oriented funding and beneficiary-oriented funding. Research also shows trends in funding going from infrastructure oriented funding (only two channels exist in this area: community funds and the organization's own funds) to beneficiary oriented funding where five channels exist - FIHO, HIIS, community and parents' funds and charity funds. It is a matter of concern that all the channels and raised funds are decreasing, and consequently humanitarian/charity activities and fundraising is increasing; probably the best known is the celebrated 'Wink at the Sun' campaign. For funding holiday programs through the charity actions, the organization is trying to introduce some new/innovative funding: AFY together with external, profit-based organizations, develops and agrees relatively stable/long-term public-private partnerships, which provide relatively more stable or permanent sources of funding. Therefore, another important finding of the research is that the beneficiary-oriented funding suffers from less and less direct and indirect public funding (municipalities, HIIS, FIHO) while funding from humanitarian activities is apparently rising. Furthermore, the critical finding of the research is that parents are to a large degree not able to finance the holidays for their children and a significant source/channel of funding of AFY children summer holiday programs is also in decline.

The most remarkable finding of the research was that although the organizational funding system is very complex and multi-layered, it still fails to ensure steady funds. In that context, the biggest threat for the AFY is that it will run out of necessary funds to obtain the summer holiday programs at the present scope since the volume of funds raised through most of the existing channels (parent's contributions, municipality contribution, HIIS and FIHO funds) is declining each year. To compensate the loss of parent's and public funding, in the last two decades, AFY has become increasingly oriented to charity fundraising. In order to ensure the necessary funds for the holiday programs, namely to ensure steady sources, fundraising is becoming the central task undertaken by the organization.

The interest in the subject of the funding of social

tourism is extensive, and it will continue to be so in the future, since, as Diekmann and McCabe (2013) claim, for social tourism to work there needs to be a system to deliver funds. In the case of AFY, both beneficiary-oriented and infrastructure-oriented funding are in decline and children's holiday programs are threatened and increasingly dependent on funds raised by the humanitarian actions and campaigns organized to raise funds from various sponsors and donors. The trend in funding social tourism programs is changing course; from public funding to charity funding, which is characteristic of more 'individualized societies' (Minnaert et al., 2013), in which social tourism could at best be argued to be a desert and funding it always a question of who deserves the state help; this is more in the line with the neo-liberal social model. Nevertheless, the research has highlighted the importance of funding for social tourism programs to exist and benefit different groups of children at AFY, but there is still a need for further research into, as Minnaert (2014) says, 'the transformative power of tourism and its potential for social policy,' in which the long-term effects of social tourism participation are explored.

At this step, we suggest that social tourism priority programs should be identified at the national level, where children are defined as one of the key beneficiary groups and are actively targeted inside those social tourism initiatives, especially children with health problems, children with special needs, and children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Those programs should be substantially supported and (co)financed from public funds, as a part of social or health policy. Secondly, due to the poor knowledge of social tourism and social tourism funding systems, we also suggest the educational programs and promotion of the social tourism phenomenon and its funding system not only among the charitable and non-profit sector but also among commercial tourism providers, since the cooperation between sectors is evidently essential for the future development and funding of social tourism.

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Electronic Word of Mouth and Its Credibility in Tourism: The Case of Tripadvisor

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Introduction

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is a form of marketing that can become or is becoming viral, as long as the message or review is sufficiently convincing, funny, or original. It is considered to be one of the oldest methods of marketing, and it is focusing on personal contact, which is established through the Internet. When communicating by Word of Mouth (WOM), we essentially exchange information regarding a product, service, brand and other factors. It is defined as informal communication, which is directed to the consumers regarding services, ownership and the characteristics of certain goods (Vanhamme & Derbaix, 2003). Tripadvisor is an American travel website company providing reviews of travel-related content. The website services are free to users, who provide most of the content, and the website is supported by an advertising business model. Tripadvisor claims to be the largest travel site in the world, with more than 60 million members and over 320 million reviews and opinions for hotels, restaurants, attractions and other travel-related businesses. The site increasingly appears to play the role of trusted intermediary for the independent traveller that spurns the services of the traditional travel agent in favour of making their own holiday arrangements (Jeacle & Carter, 2011).

There have been many negative stories connected to Tripadvisor, especially regarding fake reviews. As Filieri, Alguezaui, and McLeay (2015) said, the proliferation of fake and paid online reviews means that building and maintaining consumer trust is a challenging task for websites hosting consumer-generated

content (CGM). Trust towards a CGM website influences travel consumers' intentions to follow other users' recommendations and promotes positive WOM. Information quality predicts source credibility, customer satisfaction, and website quality (Filieri et al. 2015).

The purpose of this paper, based on a graduate thesis (Fili, 2016), was to research Electronic Word of Mouth and the travel website Tripadvisor with a focus on reviewing tourism companies. Furthermore, we researched problems of Tripadvisor with a focus on the issue of credibility of the reviews and we offered ways to analyse and overcome this in tourism. For this purpose, the marketing background and WOM are discussed together with Tripadvisor's purpose and its role in it. Negative cases about Tripadvisor's reviews are presented. Consequently, further practitioners' handling and academic research steps are suggested to interpret and handle the value of the user reviews in the tourism industry.

Word of Mouth

Bone (1992) defined Word of Mouth (WOM) as a group phenomenon, in which you can exchange thoughts, ideas and comments between one, two or more consumers, of which no one is a professional marketing source. Arndt (1967) defined it almost half a century ago as verbal and interpersonal communication, which refers to a product, service or brand and which is occurring between messenger and receiver. Buttle (1998) said that WOM is not always interpersonal and verbal because, especially in recent times, it often takes

place also in a virtual world, on various websites and forums. WOM is a process that allows the exchange of opinions or views between users and at the same time be directed towards or away from the purchase of a specific product, brand or service (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2004). Vanhamme and Derbaix (2003) described WOM as informal communication, which is directed to consumers regarding ownership, services, their sales representatives, and the characteristics of certain goods. WOM is a natural phenomenon of consumers' behavior, because they exchange information with others (strangers) for their need to share their own experiences. Marketers can or cannot affect that (Nyilasy, 2006).

A unique aspect of WOM, which differentiates it from more traditional marketing effects, is the mechanism of positive response between WOM and selling a product, service or brand. This means that positive WOM leads to more sales of products, services or brands, which consequently creates even more positive WOM and then more sales of products, services or brands, etc. (Godes & Mayzilin, 2004).

In the world of ubiquitous communication and extreme competition, WOM is becoming an increasingly important factor. Consumers are extensively employing various websites, forums, etc., with which they can search for reviews about products and services. The main dimension, which differs WOM from other forms of marketing communication, is interpersonality. Communication, therefore, takes place between many persons individually and not through mass channels. As Kotler (2004) said, people often question others (friends, relatives, professionals, etc.) about recommendations of various services, products, etc. If we trust the person who gave us information, then in the majority of cases we will do as they say. Kirby and Marsden (2006) discuss a study from the UK in which 76% of consumers positively declared WOM as the main influence on the purchase decision. The impact of traditional advertising was mentioned by only 15% of respondents. Goldenberg (2001) claims that more than 40% of consumers in the USA seek advice for choosing the services of lawyers, mechanics, and doctors from friends or relatives. Kotler (2003) refers to Kiely's survey in which 60% of 7000 con-

sumers from seven European countries indicated that relatives and friends had an impact on their choice when buying a new product.

Electronic Word of Mouth

With the increasing availability and use of the Internet, more and more people began to share and exchange opinions and information about products and services through the Internet (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). The Internet has drastically changed our way of communication, distribution, and access to information, related to consumer decisions. One of the most powerful and prominent examples of this is shown in a huge number of free and publicly accessible reviews of products and services on various websites, better known as electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). This method is unique, direct and globally comprehensive. Compared with WOM, it is less limited in ways of geographical, social and time factors. We can parallel eWOM with WOM, only that eWOM uses the Internet to communicate with others, so that information is transmitted in text and graphic or even in video format; in addition, eWOM can reach a huge crowd of people at the same time, which WOM cannot. Global nature of the Internet has created medium for eWOM among users of particular products, services, etc., which have never met and do not know each other (Gruen, Osmonbekov, & Czaplewski, 2005).

As revealed in the survey of the US research company YouGov (Gammon, 2014), 78% of Americans read online reviews, opinions, and ratings before purchase decision; of these, 52% read four or more reviews before they think they have enough and sufficient information. Among the main reasons for reading online reviews, 79% of Americans in the first place state that in this way one can provide a quality service or product; 61% of them only verify whether and how the product works and 53% of them wants to ensure that they would not be cheated. Despite the fact that the majority of Americans read online reviews to help them with a purchase decision, they are sceptical about some statements in these reviews. Most of them have an opinion that reviews are trustworthy; 90% have a belief that some people make reviews about product or service without even testing it; 91% also believe

that companies write positive reviews about their own products and 89% believe that companies write negative reviews for competitive products or companies. Among respondents who have already made online reviews of products, 62% said that they wrote a review because of a desire to help others; 35% had an opinion that it is polite to give some feedback.

Based on the work of Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004), eWOM relates to a positive, neutral or negative statement by potential, current, or former customers or users of a certain product, service, brand or company, which is accessible to the public through the Internet. Although eWOM does not have such personal contact with other communicators that WOM does, it is as much better known because of sudden and massive reach, credibility and public accessibility (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Kietzmann and Canhoto (2013) conducted research involving 58 respondents, born between 1955 and 1992, most of them born between 1988 and 1990. More than half (57%) frequently read and watch eWOM; however, for providing a negative opinion, they usually use Facebook. Nowadays, it is believed that eWOM influences purchase decisions, from which film you choose to watch, to which stocks you want to purchase on the market (Dellarocas, 2003).

TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is the world's largest travel site, enabling travellers to plan and book the perfect trip. TripAdvisor offers advice from millions of travellers and a wide variety of travel choices and planning features with seamless links to booking tools that check hundreds of websites to find great hotel prices. TripAdvisor branded sites make up the largest travel community in the world, reaching 350 million unique monthly visitors, and 320 million reviews and opinions covering more than 6.2 million accommodations, restaurants, and attractions. The sites operate in 48 countries worldwide. The company was founded in February 2000 and is headquartered in Newton, Massachusetts (TripAdvisor, 2016).

In recent years, there were quite a few negative cases connected with TripAdvisor. As reported on the website of Radio-Television Slovenia (Sajovic, 2014),

in the years 2011 and 2012, the company was under investigation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), because of complaints from British hoteliers that there are many fake reviews on TripAdvisor. The website later withdrew the slogan 'reviews you can trust' and no longer claimed that 'all the reviews were from real travellers.'

Starmer-Smith (2010) found cases of fictional restaurants and guesthouses with such good and highly rated grades that they managed to be classified amongst the best, though they did not even exist. Smith (2013) presented the fact that an executive director of one of the world's major hotel groups publicly admitted that they violated the rules and posted a lot of good reviews for their hotels and a lot of terrible reviews about their competitors. TripAdvisor was heavily criticized in March 2014 because of suspicious reviewers on their Chinese site. One of their members made 2633 reviews in four years, while someone else made 50 hotel reviews in just one month and at total of 1361 reviews in the whole year (Attwooll, 2014). In December 2014, after seven months of investigation, Italy's antitrust authority fined TripAdvisor half a million euros for publishing misleading information in their reviews (Associated Press, 2014). As reported by Quinn (2014), a hotel in Blackpool charged a couple 100 pounds after they posted a critical review about the hotel on TripAdvisor.

Conclusions for eWOM in Tourism

Despite the listed negative examples, one can hardly imagine organizing travels in recent years without TripAdvisor. It saves a lot of trouble and time and allows a more detailed and authentic description of restaurants, hotels, tourist attractions, etc. It is a source of great ideas and tips. Opinions and reviews of tourists are one of the most influential elements for organizing a potential trip to a tourist destination. However, one must consider the credibility of reviews and subjectivity of each comment, so TripAdvisor is useful for creating a consensus about certain tourist experience. It is easy to use for tourism companies; one can quickly communicate with users (quick response to any criticism of guests) and have positive and negative comments in one place and, most importantly, it provides

a real insight into the operations of quality management.

Tourism companies can decide if they (do not) want to provide TripAdvisor feedback and respond to customers' reviews (both positive and negative). Controlling this information and giving feedback to the guests can be crucial for the tourism company management. By doing this, companies can show guests that they value their opinions and want to give them as comfortable a stay as possible at their premises. Most important are negative reviews, which allow insights into the company's activities and the improvement of their services. When providers of tourism services decide not to take advantage of such activities, they might miss very influential promotion opportunities.

Further research on this subject is needed and should include a very detailed analysis of tourism company reviews (on an individual company level and in the tourism's specific segment), where analysis would have also been made on the other side, with the help from company management. In this way, one could get insights in the company point of view and discover other dimensions and secrets of reviewing on TripAdvisor. To obtain such data, one should thoughtfully approach the companies' staff in charge of dealing with the portal TripAdvisor and TripAdvisor commenters to get both objective aspects of the story.

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Social Tourism Benefits for Seniors

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Introduction

Contemporary literature on social tourism widely recognizes the important role of social tourism and the benefits it has in terms of social inclusion and quality of life, and other social benefits that it brings to individuals and society as a whole (Minnaert, Maitland, & Miller, 2013; Minnaert & Schapmans, 2009; McCabe, 2009; Gabruč, 2015).

McCabe's study (2009), for example, emphasizes four important reasons for the family holiday such as: (1) spending time together as a family; (2) time away from daily life and circumstances; (3) recovering from ill-health and bereavement; and (4) visiting new places and enjoying new activities. The study 'Understanding the benefits of social tourism: linking participation to subjective well-being and quality of life' conducted by McCabe, Joldersma, and Li (2013) indicates similar results, underscoring that holidays have a positive effect on the emotional state of respondents. Sedgley, Pritchard, and Morgan (2012) emphasize that children and families living in poverty are excluded from holidaying and consequently excluded from the quality-of-life and well-being benefits that a holiday can offer. The benefits of holidaying reported in their study are often connected with opportunities in terms of family bonding and spending quality time with their children, enhancing both the adults' and children's well-being. The study also reveals other benefits, such as improved self-esteem and confidence, and opportunities to develop new skills and widen perspectives. On

the relationship between tourism and quality of life and subjective well-being, McCabe and Johnson (2013) indicate that tourism contributes to the social tourist's well-being, confirming studies which have found that tourism contributes to improvements in quality of life. The findings also suggest that 'holidays offer more value than simply short-term, hedonistic experiences, but can contribute to the long-term, broader aspects of life satisfaction and positive functioning' (McCabe & Johnson, 2013, p. 60). Holidays have a high level of impact in relation to happiness and optimism, family life and relationships.

Studies on social tourism have mostly concentrated on the benefits for children and young families, yet few analyses have investigated its value for the wellbeing of disadvantaged older people. According to the recent study of Morgan, Pritchard and Sedgley (2015) that explores the links between wellbeing and social tourism opportunities for older people, social tourism has an important impact on their wellbeing in psychological, physiological as well as spiritual senses. Through social tourism, older people may find new companionship; it also represents a getaway from everyday routines as well as rest and an opportunity for reminiscence or renegotiating self-identity.

Thus, the focus of this study was to analyse the main benefits social tourism brings for older people in Slovenia, as perceived by the stakeholders involved in social tourism for seniors. This paper presents the preliminary results of the ongoing (October 2015–

September 2017) project Identification, Classification, and Potential of Development of Social Tourism Products in Slovenia, with an Emphasis on Programs for Seniors¹ with the aims of analysing the situation in the emerging field of social tourism in Slovenia; researching the developmental needs and potentials in the field of development of social tourism products, and developing the guidelines for systemic measures in this field. We present the result of qualitative research (half-structured interviews)² among different actors dealing with social tourism for the elderly in Slovenia. We interviewed representatives of various institutions that deal with various groups of senior beneficiaries:

1. *Older people with low socio-economic status* who would not be able to afford holidays and are thus involved in humanitarian programs, such as Red Cross programs with the aim of positive impact on health;
2. *Elderly people who need specific infrastructural adjustments*, such as those with disabilities, who use facilities and services tailored to their needs (e.g. vacation facilities of the Slovenian Paraplegic Associations);
3. *Seniors as one of the target groups of tourists* for whom special programs are designed and adjusted in terms of price, payment terms, content, animation (e.g. Travel agency Relax in cooperation with pensioners' associations)

¹ The project is run by the Faculty of Tourism Studies at the University of Primorska in cooperation with the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska and Faculty of Design, and financed by the Slovenian Research Agency and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

² Interviews were conducted with: representative of the Slovenian Red Cross, representative of the institute and travel agency Premiki, representative of Hospitality and Tourism Union, representative of Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations, representative of Pensioners' Association Škofja Loka, representative of Pensioners' Association Semedela, representative of Hotel Delfin, representative of tourist agency Relax and representative of the Slovenian Paraplegic Association.

4. *Seniors as only one of groups of tourists* – there are no special adjustments for them (e.g. vacation facilities of Hospitality and Tourism Union).

Within this research, we focused on various topics, such as their views on the development of social tourism programs and the research of existing social tourism programs in Slovenia, beneficiaries, the extent, and duration of programs, organization and financing of programs as well as the benefits for seniors.

Regardless of the group involved, the benefits of holidays for the elderly, as recognized by the stakeholders, are various and can generally be grouped into three clusters: (1) sociability and social inclusion; (2) health and (3) education and horizon broadening. These aspects are also interconnected and difficult to separate.

Sociability

As recognized by previous studies, tourism programs offer opportunities for social interaction (Hazel, 2005; Minnaert, Maitland, & Miller, 2009; McCabe et al., 2010). Sociability and social interaction of older people directly address the loneliness and isolation which is a major issue for many of them (Morgan et al., 2015) and have a positive impact on their wellbeing: it is beneficial for elderly to be able to extend their social worlds and to have opportunity for increased social interaction and companionship that holidays provide. This aspect was also recognized as an essential element of social inclusion for senior beneficiaries of social tourism within our study.

The representative of the Slovenian Red Cross stresses the importance of social contacts among older tourists:

In these holidays, team spirit is also important, socializing, encouraging each other, this positive motivation that older people share with each other.

The tourist agency Relax has special target programs for senior tourists, having recognized the importance for socializing for older tourists; therefore, they also regularly adapt their programs to include as much socializing as possible:

[...] this means that we listen to them and prepare the programs [...] from the price point of view as well as regard to the organization of guided activities. They like to go on trips, but above all, they like to socialize in the evenings. There are many guests from all parts of Slovenia who actually met in our Senior clubs and then all kinds of bonds developed.

Similarly, the representative of the Pensioners' Association Škofja Loka highlights the benefits of sociability and the importance of organizing the tourist trip so as to give them many opportunities for interactions:

Benefits? I think that this [travel programs] is necessary. People should also have their time: to take care of themselves, to get together with their peers, to socialize, to exchange everyday matters between each other, to converse. They also establish various friendships in this way. This is also beneficial. They don't think about their illnesses. We always make sure that there is a lot happening on these holidays; it means that we organize sports, hiking activities during the holidays. [...] The more we socialize, the more we can understand each other.

Health

Research on the relationship between participation in tourism and self-perceived health as well as the functional capacity of elderly people, shows there is a major positive connection between them. In this context, the participation of elderly in tourism can be a part of social and health policy due to its ability to reduce public spending on social care and healthcare (Ferrer, Ferri Sanz, Durá Ferrandis, McCabe, & Sánchez García, 2015). The benefit of tourism activities for elderly on their health has also been recognized by our interviewees. The Red Cross representative sees holidays for the elderly as an important preventive health measure:

And it is the fact that these holidays in seaside resorts, particularly on Debeli Rtič where there are two recognized natural healing resources: its

microclimate and the sea water, have an important impact on the health of the elderly. [...] The purpose (of their programs) is always to have a positive influence on health, these preventive measures.

Furthermore, holidays have been recognized as an integral part of active aging (representative of Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations):

For [pensioners] to have a possibility to go on holidays, to change the environment, to socialize [...] This is why the elderly go to spas [...] to maintain a level of fitness and health, to stay active, to have hobbies [...] This means active and healthy aging.

Social tourism programs for the elderly have benefits for their well-being (Red Cross representative):

And the assistance we offer in the context of social tourism for seniors is particularly in the fact that they can come to the sea, change the environment and relax here, to experience programs offered by our health resort, particularly for them. And this certainly has good effects for their health.

Moreover, the beneficial role of well-being of retirees for society as a whole has also been stressed (representative of Pensioners' Association Semedela):

[...] certainly such health maintenance is positive in general for the whole society. Because a vital, happy pensioner, who socializes [...] is certainly more useful [...] and it is already one of the social benefits [...] that people are satisfied. Satisfaction. That's a lot.

And (Hospitality and Tourism Union representative):

[...] in my opinion, this is a good concept for the whole society. Health, well-being, integration.

Horizon Broadening

Social tourism can have a wide arrange of positive effects, among which are new knowledge, meeting new people, new places, changing perspectives, broadening of experiences, and other factors 'Social tourism is thus not only a widening of geographical horizons, but can also widen mental and psychological horizons' (Minnaert & Schapmans, 2009, p. 60). We summarized the above mentioned under the term 'horizon broadening.' Horizon broadening could also be linked to experimental learning (Minnaert et al., 2009, p. 321); holidays with opportunities to explore new environments and engage in new activities, meet new people and be faced with unexpected problems, can start an experimental learning cycle which can improve holiday makers skills and affect their views, attitudes, and behaviors (for example self-esteem). The possibility for the elderly to be involved in tourism, to go on holidays, to experience new things certainly represents an added value in their life (Hospitality and Tourism Union representative):

The horizons are widening, life can be more beautiful [...] For you to go somewhere, not only to have a rest, but to have an active rest. [...] But these walks around the island, visiting new destinations, trying new things. All this, in my opinion, enriches [us]. And this is a kind of third tourist university.

If they have the possibility, the elderly like to explore and learn about new things and holidays offer these opportunities (representative of Pensioners' Association Škofja Loka):

Yes, I would say that retirees, we are still very curious, we want to see many things. In fact, there comes a period of life that we still want to learn about many things, get to know them.

And (Hospitality and Tourism Union representative):

[...] and we know these are benefits [going on a holiday], that this enriches us, the elderly, with knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

The findings of this qualitative study support previous studies on the benefits of social tourism. Holidays can have positive effects on various aspects of the life of seniors, as confirmed through our research. Slovenian stakeholders involved in different social tourism initiatives involving seniors have recognized its positive impacts. Since in addition to other social and economic benefits, social tourism programmes can present a major form of social intervention diminishing cost for social care and healthcare (Minnaert & Schapmans, 2009), it would be significant that these initiatives would be also recognized systematically by the Slovenian government as well as policy makers and join existing European social tourism programmes. Finally, more systematic development and regulation of social tourism for seniors in Slovenia also ought to be one of the national priorities due to on-going social changes: the aging society and an increasing number of seniors.

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Recent Research in the Field of the Interrelation of Foreign Languages and the Field of Tourism: Report from the 3rd International Conference Foreign Languages and Tourism

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Languages and tourism are two highly interrelated topics connected through many aspects. Specifically, foreign languages intertwine in everyday spoken communication among visitors and locals, in written creation or translations of texts in foreign languages, in marketing texts and many other areas that the language of tourism reaches. It is undoubtedly an intriguing topic to be studied, especially because of the specifics the language of tourism has to offer as the tourism lexis is characterized by 'the interaction of the general lexicon and multidisciplinary terminology within the field of tourism' (Mikolič, 2015). The multidisciplinary nature of tourism enables researchers to study it from many different viewpoints and perspectives. That makes the scope of research of the connections among foreign languages and tourism vast, which was clearly visible at the third international conference titled Foreign Languages and Tourism this September held in Portorož, at The Faculty for Tourism Studies – Turistica. The conference was organized by three institutions working in the field of tourism: the University of Rijeka, the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija from Croatia; the University of Primorska, The Faculty of Tourism Studies Turistica from Slovenia; the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland Eisenstadt from Austria.

The multidisciplinary of tourism and its scope of research combined with the language study field invited a diverse range of research touching on the topics of foreign languages and tourism from many distinct viewpoints. Thus, the conference offered a view into recent and innovative research from the fields of linguistic analysis of tourism language and its texts,

pedagogical practices and research from the fields of foreign language for specific tourism purposes teaching and shed light on connecting linguistic, tourism and cultural research. This report intends to present the main highlights of the conference by dividing conference reports into the two main categories that presented papers dealt with: the linguistic view, as well as pedagogical and didactic views on the connection between foreign languages and tourism.

Linguistic analyses offered a vast range of innovative research. Bait and Folgieri (2016), for example, spoke of the of innovative cloud-based tools and procedures on Natural Language Processing which enable researchers to extract sentiments from content and analyse them in a human manner. They used the method to analyse an Alitalia in-flight magazine. Other reporters presented their research on different language phenomena inside the specific field of language for tourism. Blažević and Košuta (2016) analysed collocations appearing in texts of the official Croatian tourist board websites and tour guides, especially focusing on descriptions of tourist destinations in Croatia. As non-equivalent collocations have proved to be problematic in foreign languages production, their results could be used to develop guidelines for translators as well as teachers of foreign languages in tourism. Following that, two contributions analysed anglicisms in tourism texts. Strezovska (2016) contrastively analysed their use in a corpus of Macedonian and German tourism texts and elaborated on why they come to be used. Whereas Bosnar-Valković and Mlacović (2016), researching anglicisms in the German language of tourism, concluded that the decli-

nation of the nominal anglicisms takes place according to the German model, most adjective anglicisms retain their original form, and the verbal anglicisms seem fully integrated into the German morphological system.

The category of linguistically oriented researches presented at the conference continues with reports on studies on various linguistic tools. One of them was researched by Papp (2016), who dealt with the linguistic tools of psychological strategies in advertisements of tour agencies. She specifically focused on the strategies of persuasion and pointed out those most widely used. Tóth (2016) also dealt with advertising materials. She researched German hotel brochures in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in an intercultural comparison. Key differences among the brochures were highlighted next to the reasons these differences originate. According to Toth, they tend to arise due to the influence of one's own language and culture on the target language. Fabijanić and Krpan (2016) touched upon the terminology of cultural tourism in Italian and German languages in teaching materials for tourism purposes at the tertiary level. In the contrastive linguistics perspective, the contribution highlighted similarities and differences among expressional language equivalents with the Croatian language. Further, Lozo and Sušac (2016) dealt with naming in the language of tourism. More specifically, their contribution presented the current tendencies in tourism brand names and the motivation for their creation. They also researched different linguistic tools and identified those currently most often used in the domain of tourism.

Pedagogical and didactic views on foreign languages and tourism were the second most discussed topic at the conference. In a more general sense, the topic was examined by Misiunaite, Patackaite, and Zemaitiene (2016) who discussed the concept of multilingualism and its importance in the tourism sector with the purpose of defining how many students speak how many foreign languages in Lithuania as well as whether they are willing to learn more. Within the scope of pedagogy and didactics, the presenters also dealt with various viewpoints within the interrelation of the topics and presented the newest innovative

examples of good practice in a foreign language for tourism purposes teaching. Brecelj and Lovec (2016), for example, spoke of student presentations that they implemented in their course as a good motivational source of language learning. As types of other speaking activities, Gudelj (2016) observed the connection among role-playing activities, identity formation and language learning in a classroom of language for tourism. In contrast to speaking activities in class, Čepon (2016) investigated silence in English classes. She claims speaking anxiety is a critical factor in foreign language learning and a quarter of the participants in her study, who considered themselves to have low anxiety when speaking general English, were prone to elevated levels of speaking anxiety when performing complex speaking tasks in business English class. Motivation was also mentioned by Orel Frank (2016) who discussed student autonomy and taking responsibility inside and outside the classroom. Based on her research in language for tourism purposes classrooms, she proposed a model by which activities are done in the free time of students, when student feel most autonomous, are to be introduced into classroom work. This should increase their motivation in learning. In a similar manner, Majorosi and Peres (2016) touched upon the responsibility of students and further proposed a model in which ideas and ways of how the reflexive ability of learners can be promoted, especially in the field of subject-specific teaching in higher education.

Tertiary educational programs were dealt with in detail by Miškulin (2016) who discussed the topic of updating hospitality language programs through content and language-integrated learning implementation. She discussed the need for changes in times of globalization and proposed the uses of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as the method to increase motivation and reach higher standards of language proficiency in hospitality students' language courses. Sinkovič and Trdan Lavrenčič (2016) remained on the topic of higher education and spoke of the need to advertise learning of German as a foreign language in Slovenia, which is nowadays often put aside due to the increase in the need to learn English as a *lingua franca*.

The conference offered a view into current research in the field of connecting foreign languages and tourism. Presenters reported many new as well as innovative pedagogical practices in the field of foreign languages for tourism purposes education, while the other papers dealt more with purely linguistic research based on various types of tourism texts. It was an event that proved a high connection between the areas of research of languages and tourism. This was even further enhanced by the fact that the conference was organized in four official languages: English, Slovene, Croatian, and German. The third gathering of this kind organized by three faculties of three different countries was a success on many levels as it managed to put the (often neglected) connection between languages and tourism into focus.

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Izkustveno trženje kot pospeševalnik zadovoljstva strank na trgu športnega turizma

Zygmunt Waškowski

Športne prireditve so gonilna sila na trgu športnega turizma. Njihova organiziranost in privlačnost imata pomemben vpliv na število obiskovalcev, zato organizatorji iščejo rešitve, ki bodo zagotovile največjo možno udeležbo. Koncept izkustvenega trženja je zelo priljubljen in dobro ustreza potrebam upravljanja športnih prireditev, saj lahko zaradi tega koncepta organizatorji ponudijo turistom tisto, kar najpogostejše iščejo: čustva in doživetja. V tem članku je opisano, kako koncept izkustvenega trženja uporabljajo organizatorji mednarodnih maratonov. Opravljena raziskava potrjuje, da se ta koncept pogosto uporablja skozi najrazličnejša trženjska orodja. Na podlagi podrobne problemske analize je bil razvit model upravljanja športnih dogodkov z uporabo izkustvenega trženja. Model se osredotoča na tri faze organiziranja maratona: pred, med in po dogodku.

Ključne besede: izkustveno trženje, športni turizem, športne prireditve, maratoni
Academica Turistica, 9(2), 3–11

Vesoljski turizem in varnost

Janez Mekinc in Iztok Bončina

Namen našega proučevanja je dodatno osvetliti razumevanje varnosti kot enega najpomembnejših vidikov vesoljskega turizma. Skozi varnostno perspektivo turističnega razvoja vesoljskih poletov želimo prispevati h globljemu in k bolj celovitemu dojemanju varnostnih dejavnikov pri komercialnih vesoljskih potovanjih in s tem tudi k bolj trajnostnemu razvoju te nove turistične industrije. Zato je pomembno, da že v predporodni dobi vesoljskega turizma razmišljamo, kako bi načrtovali in izvajali bodoče turistične polete v vesolje z upoštevanjem vseh možnih varnostnih dejavnikov ter čim manjšim tveganjem. Omejitve naloge vidimo v dejstvu, da je vesoljski turizem nov pojav in novo raziskovalno področje, ki šele postavlja teoretične in metodološke temelje svojega razvoja. Zato so raziskave tako vesoljskega turizma kot tudi varnosti pri komercialnih vesoljskih poletih, omejene. Tipologija vesoljskih turistov praktično še ne obstaja, zato je tudi primerjava varnosti v vesoljskem turizmu z ostalimi vrstami turizma omejena. Študija se osredotoča na analizo novih varnostnih strategij vesoljskega turizma, z upoštevanjem izkušenj in znanj, pridobljenih iz prejšnjih oblik pustolovskega in ekstremnega turizma.

Ključne besede: Ključne besede: vesoljski turizem, varnost, polet v vesolje, tveganje
Academica Turistica, 9(2), 13–25

Marikultura in priložnosti razvoja trajnostnega turizma

Armand Faganel, Roberto Biloslavo in Aleksander Janež

Turizem je pomembna gospodarska panoga, ki prispeva k rasti BDP v številnih državah, medtem ko marikultura pokriva več kot polovico povpraševanja rib v razvitem svetu. Povpraševanje in konkurenca v panogi gojenja rib se povečuje po vsem svetu,

tako se tudi zavedanje o pomenu nadaljnega razvoja trajnostnega malega gospodarstva. V tem pogledu so inovacije ključnega pomena za spodbujanje trajnostnih poslovnih modelov, ki lahko zagotovijo trdno gospodarsko učinkovitost in hkrati skrbijo za naravno okolje. Članek prispeva k literaturi trajnostnih poslovnih modelov z opisno študijo primera podjetja iz marikulture in dopolnjevanja osnovne dejavnosti s turistično. Študija primera trajnostnega poslovnega modela v marikulturi je bila izvedena z analizo zemljevida poslovnega modela, ki povezuje številne tržno usmerjene elemente poslovnega modela s potrebami različnih interesnih skupin.

Ključne besede: marikultura, turizem, blagovna znamka, razvoj, trajnost, zemljevid poslovnega modela, sonaravni procesi.

Academica Turistica, 9(2), 27–43

Pričakovanja in zadovoljstvo obiskovalcev FIS Svetovnega pokala v smučarskih skokih Planica 2015

Eva Podovšovnik in Miha Lesjak

Planica se nahaja v dolini v Triglavskem narodnem parku v Sloveniji. V tej dolini se vsako leto (že več kot 40 let) pomerijo najboljši smučarji skakalci na največji skakalnici na svetu. Nordijski Center Planica je bil pred kratkim prenovljen – delno s pomočjo sredstev Evropske Unije. Leta 2015 se je tako prvič izvedel finale FIS Svetovnega pokala v smučarskih skokih na novi skakalnici. Z namenom razumevanja zadovoljstva in pričakovanj obiskovalcev te prireditve je bila izvedena anketna raziskava, v kateri je sodelovalo 618 obiskovalcev te prireditve. Anketirane smo prosili, da ocenijo pričakovanja in njihovo stopnjo zadovoljstva z različnimi elementi prireditve. Pri tem smo si raziskovalci zastavili raziskovalno hipotezo, da pričakovanja obiskovalcev te prireditve vplivajo na njihovo zadovoljstvo s prireditvijo. Raziskovalno hipotezo smo preverili s pomočjo regresijske analize. Rezultati raziskave so potrdili našo raziskovalno hipotezo, da pričakovanja obiskovalcev te prireditve vplivajo na njihovo zadovoljstvo s prireditvijo. Z rekonstrukcijo Nordijskega Centra Planica je dolina Planice dobila novo priložnost za razvoj svojega imidža. Prav to dejstvo narekuje organizatorjem te prireditve, da nadaljuje z raziskovanjem in merjenjem pričakovanj in zadovoljstva obiskovalcev prireditve, saj jim bodo lahko le na ta način še naprej zagotavljali optimalno izkušnjo.

Ključne besede: Planica, športni dogodek, pričakovanja, zadovoljstvo, obiskovalci

Academica Turistica, 9(2), 45–54

Vpliv centralizacije javnih služb na krizo turističnih storitev

Katja Čanžar in Marjetka Rangus

Zadnjih osem let se v Sloveniji odvijajo težnje po centralizaciji državnih institucij v večja mesta, izven manjših mest. Državne institucije so običajno umeščene v večja urbana okolja. Takšno okolje je tudi občina Brežice, ki je na četrtem mestu po številu

turističnih nočitev med občinami v Sloveniji ter v širšem prostoru predstavlja regionalno upravno, kulturno in zaposlitveno središče. Trg turističnih storitev v urbanem okolju je odvisen tudi od lokalnih porabnikov in javnih uslužbencev, ki te storitve koristijo v in izven turistične sezone. V raziskavi želimo ugotoviti odvisnost ponudnikov turističnih storitev od lokalnih porabnikov in javnih uslužbencev. Turistični sektor je pogosto podvržen sezonskim nihanjem, ki predstavljajo velika tveganja za turistične ponudnike. V raziskavi ugotavljamo, v kolikšni meri koriščenje storitev javnih uslužbencev skozi vse leto omogoča ponudnikom turističnih storitev preživetje izven sezone. Raziskovanje je pokazalo, da centralizacija javnih služb vpliva na spremembo lokacije koriščenja storitev, ki je pomembno povezano z lokacijo delovnega mesta. Zbrani podatki so pokazali, da koriščenje storitev javnih uslužbencev skozi vse leto omogoča ponudnikom turističnih storitev preživetje izven sezone. Centralizacija javnih služb posledično lahko vpliva na krizo turističnih storitev v urbanem okolju, saj domačini in zaposleni v urbanih središčih predstavljajo stalno, tudi nesezonsko povpraševanje in tako ponudnikom omogočajo preživetje skozi vse leto.

Ključne besede: centralizacija, javni uslužbenec, občina Brežice, turizem in storitve povezane s potovanji ali potovalna industrija

Academica Turistica, 9(2), 55–64

Imeti ali ne imeti sistem kategorizacija nastanitvenih obratov v Sloveniji

Maja Uran Maravič

Zaradi posledic, ki jih lahko ima za turistično gospodarstvo zaradi povečanja stroškov poslovanja, je zelo delikatno spreminjati sistem kategorizacije brez soglasja ali podpore velikega dela nastanitvenega sektorja. Namen te študije je ugotoviti, kaj turistični deležniki menijo o spremembah sistema kategorizacije in kako bi ga spremenili. Zelo malo študij govori o elementih sistema in jih primerja med seboj, kar bi omogočilo vpogled v to, kateri sistem je bolj primeren ali sprejemljiv za deležnike v določeni destinaciji. Zato smo pristopili k izdelavi lastne študije. Mnenja so se zbirala s spletnim anketnim vprašalnikom, ki je bil poslan na 1475 spletnih naslovov ponudnikov nastanitev, turističnih organizacij in ocenjevalcev za kategorizacijo. Rezultati so predstavljeni z enostavnimi statističnimi metodami – deskriptivno statistiko. Ugotovili smo, da večina anketirancev podpira obvezni sistem kategorizacije, da naj se kategorija nastanitvenega objekta ne uporablja za odmero turistične takse ali davkov, da naj za sistem skrbi pristojno ministrstvo, da naj nastanitve ocenjujejo domači ocenjevalci in da si slovenski turistični deležniki želijo priključitve harmoniziranemu evropskemu sistemu kategorizacije hotelov – Hotelstars. Vsaka sprememba sistema kategorizacije bo vedno imela nasprotnike, zato je toliko bolj pomembno ugotoviti, kaj si želi večina deležnikov.

Ključne besede: kategorizacija nastanitvenih obratov, hotelirstvo, Slovenija, Hotelstars

Academica Turistica, 9(2), 65–76

Pomen energije v turističnem sektorju

Marinela Krstinić Nižić, Zvonimira Šverko Grdić in Andreja Hustić

Prispevek preučuje problematiko in specifična vprašanja povezana s turizmom in porabo energije. Namen je ugotoviti vzročno posledične povezave med turizmom in porabo energije ter določiti, ali povečanje števila turistov poviša porabo energije. V prispevku analiziramo naslednje države EU s podobno gospodarsko klimo: Hrvaška, Slovenija, Slovaška, Madžarska in Češka. Razmerja med energijo in turizmom preverjamo s pomočjo analize sekundarnih podatkov iz statističnih baz (Eurostat, WTO, IES) z rabo kazalnikov kot na primer s številom prenočitev, BDP in porabo energije. V vseh analiziranih državah so se programske aktivnosti v preteklem obdobju usmerjale v izboljšanje sposobnosti upravljanja z energijo in znižanja stroškov izvajanja ukrepov, kot so izobraževalni in informativni projekti. To je privedlo do znatnih prihrankov v porabi energije v storitvenem sektorju, kar je prikazano v empiričnem delu prispevka. Rezultati kažejo na povečanje števila prenočitev v vseh analiziranih državah in odražajo očiten neposreden vpliv turizma na BDP. Vendar v nekaterih državah povečanje števila prenočitev ne pomeni povečanje porabe energije. Rezultati kažejo, da imajo nekatere države (Slovenija) bolj razvito gospodarstvo in s tem tudi večjo porabo energije, v primerjavi z nekaterimi drugimi državami (Hrvaška). Raziskava ponuja zanesljive in učinkovite kvalitativne in kvantitativne informacije o problematiki energetike in turizma kot tudi pregled kazalnikov v izbranih državah, ki prikazujejo ciklično razmerje med turizmom, gospodarstvom in energetiko.

Ključne besede: turizem, poraba energije, gospodarski razvoj, BDP
Academica Turistica, 9(2), 77–83

Prostorska strnjenost in medsebojna odvisnost na znanju temelječih storitev in turizma: primer Poljske

Justyna Majewska in Szymon Truskolaski

Namen raziskave je dvojen: (1) identificirati grozde turističnih ponudnikov in ponudnikov na znanju temelječih storitev (KIS) kot inter-regionalnih strnjenosti obeh pojavov, vključujoč območje in intenzivnost t.i. prelivanja med poljskimi okraji, (2) raziskati prostorska razmerja med regionalnim turističnim razvojem in ponudniki KIS. Za merjenje inter-regionalnosti je bila uporabljena prostorska statistika avtokorelacije (lokalna Moranova I statistika) – lokalni indikatorji prostorske povezanosti (LISA). Za analizo odnosov med turističnim razvojem in lokalizacijo ponudnikov KIS v poljskih okrajih pa smo uporabili tudi kontingenčne tabele. Podatki za obdobje 2009–2015 so bili pridobljeni od Centralnega statističnega urada Poljske (podjetja umeščena v sektor I in J po NACE klasifikaciji in število turističnih nočitev). Opažovali smo statistično značilen učinek prelivanja turistične ponudbe v grozdih, oblikovanih na osnovi urbanizacije in lokalizacije. Prav tako smo obravnavali procese konvergence strnjenosti v urbanih regijah med turističnimi in KIS grozdi. Ugotovili smo, da je v zrelih turističnih destinacijah prisotna tako nižja kot višja intenzivnost KIS, odvisno od tipa grozda (urbaniziran ali lokaliziran). Po drugi strani pa je za najvišji odstotek okrajev z visoko stopnjo rasti turističnega razvoja značilna srednji in

visok delež ponudnikov KIS. Rezultati kažejo na pozitivno korelacijo med deležem ponudnikov KIS v območnih gospodarstvih in dinamiko rasti turističnih destinacij. Poudarjena je tudi potreba po raziskavah vloge KIS (vključujoč IKT) v različnih fazah turističnega razvoja in za spodbujanje inovativnosti.

Ključne besede: na znanju temelječe storitve, turistična destinacija, strnjenost, grozdi, učinek prelivanja, poljski okraji

Academica Turistica, 9(2), 85–95

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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.

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of the *UN nonproft handbook* (Comparative Non-profit Sector Working Paper No. 49). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

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