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Original Scientific Article

Perceived Threat of COVID-19 and Future Travel Avoidance: Results from an Early Convenient Sample in Slovenia

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The present study provides a snapshot of Slovenian tourists' perceptions in a historically unique point of time – the early days of the COVID-19-related lockdown. Based on an online survey performed in March and April 2020 the study provides first insights into Slovenian tourists' perceived threats of COVID-19 on two dimensions: severity and susceptibility; how this depends on their demography and past travel experience and what, in this specific point in time, they think about future travel avoidance. The results have shown that age affects the two measured dimensions of perceived threat and future travel avoidance, but only with women. Furthermore, people who have travelled the most in the past express the least likelihood of avoidance to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who are more educated, on the other hand, perceive higher risk, yet education has no role in their expressed future travel avoidance. The results, moreover, show that the moral obligation towards taking care of others might be a highly important element in the success factor of COVID-19 measures and thus future appeals by the tourism industry. Finally, the results show that we cannot easily predict how the general population will behave regarding their future travel avoidance since the opinions are not polarised in the extremes. This does indicate, however, that tourists will be susceptible to the context-specific factors of future travel decisions, such as assurances of health safety provided by the tourism industry.

Keywords: COVID-19, tourism, health threat perception, future travel avoidance, fear appeals

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Introduction

With the declaration of a pandemic, caused by the spread of the COVID-19 disease, the world is experiencing the biggest lock-down in recent decades, also affecting the developed countries of the western hemisphere. WHO released the announcement that COVID-19 disease is characterised as a pandemic on March 11th 2020, thus calling for action on a global level to fight against the disease. Even though this pandemic is not the first nor the only one of the 21st century (Mathis et al., 2015), the world is facing a global health crisis unlike any in the last 75 years.

The travel industry is amongst those first and most hit by the pandemic (OECD, 2020). Countries have taken different measures to limit the spread of the disease, including total or partial lock-down, strict limitations on meetings of people in public and closed public and private places, limited free mobility of residents and execution of services. The latest report by UNWTO shows that 96% of global destinations have imposed travel restrictions (UNWTO, 2020). Public and massive modes of mobility (i.e. airplanes, trains, buses, ships, etc.) have been recognised as a primary threat to the spread of this new disease and thus first to be made subject to preventive measures.

Furthermore, experiences vital to the tourism sector such as cruises, gambling, wellness, beauty and health services, group sport activities, concerts and events, culinary events and many others have been hit hardest by governmental restrictions and practically shut down for the related period. According to UNWTO estimation, tourist arrivals on a global level in 2020 will be down by 20% to 30% when compared with 2019 figures. This in turn will also affect millions of tourism jobs and it will take several years to recover from the fall.

A pandemic is classified in literature as one of the five major categories of disasters, next to political events, natural disasters, financial events and man-made events, and the travel and tourism sector have suffered the hardest thus far from the series of pandemics and epidemics like avian flu and swine flu, which have occurred in the 21st century (Bhati et al., 2016). The tourism industry has proven to be vulnerable to national disasters, even though on a global level such downturns are not always visible (UNWTO, 2011).

Since World War II, the tourism industry has experienced enormous growth which has also caused a change in the character of tourism. The early 20th century decades were characterised as the infancy period of mass tourism (Sezgin & Yolal, 2012). The Fordist model of mass production made mass tourism possible and turned tourism itself in effect into a Fordist mode of production and consumption (Torres, 2002). The after-war period has been marked, among other factors, by greater prosperity of the population at large, paid holidays for many European workers, better education, technological development, etc., which have resulted in greater numbers of tourist arrivals per year, increasing from 25 million in 1950 to 1,401 million in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019) and 1.5 billion in 2019.

This form of development has in turn created a feeling of existential angst or alienation amongst its citizens. According to Smith (2003), long working hours, and fragmentations of communities and traditions have exacerbated feelings of isolation, depression, and stress, causing individuals to seek solace and activities which enhance their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Within the literature, escapism has been posited as a key motivation factor for travel, relating to escape from routine, making important decisions, desire to postpone work or other responsibilities (Cohen, 2010).

Considering the modern development of tourism and the latest events related to the pandemic, the tourism sector is expecting major challenges in the immediate future. Compared to the usual asymmetric distribution of the impact of economic recession, the impacts of pandemics are symmetrical. With COVID-19-related measures, tourism was practically suspended. According to UNWTO (UNWTO, 2020), 93% of destinations in Europe (as of 6 April 2020) have adopted COVID-19-related restrictions since January 2020. Europe as a destination alone still represents more than 50% of all international tourist arrivals, and the Americas an additional 15% (UNWTO, 2019).

The questions of when and how tourism will rebound are thus of a highly important focus with not enough early information on how potential future travelers will respond to the COVID-19 crisis. This re-

search builds on results of an online survey conducted in Slovenia in the first three weeks of COVID-19 self-isolation measures. The sample was a convenient sample, focusing on catching a specific timeframe of early responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research aims presented in this paper were threefold: (a) to analyse the perceived threat of the COVID-19 disease expressed by the survey participants, (b) to analyse the future travel avoidance expressed by the survey participants, and (c) to analyse how threat perception and future travel avoidance are correlated with age, travel experience, gender and education of the survey participants.

The research question is as follows: How do tourists in the early phase of lockdown perceive threats related to COVID-19 and express future travel avoidance with respect to their age, travel experience, gender, and education? The answer to the question could help the industry to address the key segments in the opening-up phase and identify the issues that potential tourists care and worry about most.

Literature Review

Threats, Risks, Security and Tourism

Safety and security have become key criteria in global travel decisions. The global importance and dimension of tourism as an economic activity have caused safety concerns not only to affect the individual and his or her travel choices, but also the economic and political stability of entire regions. Bajpai (2000) argues that the term 'human security' directs the concept of security towards the survival, well-being, and freedom of people. Contrary to Bajpai (2000), Inglehart and Norris (2012) refer to the concept of human security as a security concept that seeks to ensure the security of individuals and communities where there is a lack of agreement on its definition of content between 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from desires.'

In the United Nations Human Development Survey (Bajpai, 2000; Oberleitner, 2002; Paris, 2001), human security also refers to the protection of personal safety and individual freedom against diseases that we define as indirect violence and set aside, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, overpopulation, wars and refugee crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extreme vulnerability of the global population, both economically and physically. Protective policies are needed to reduce risks to the most vulnerable sections of the population. Moussa (2001) notes that human security is an acknowledgment of the right of people and nations to an equal share of global economic, social and political development and protection against threats arising from their own and other countries.

The consequences of global security crises demonstrate the impact of security on tourism, and on the other hand, tourism has very little impact on security at the macro level, as stressed by Mekinc and Dobovšek (2011), and that tourism is very dependent on security, as also claimed by Hall et al. (2003). This is additionally confirmed by the findings of Mansfeld and Korman (2015), who emphasise that the seemingly safe and developing tourism environment is very fragile since the reason for the restoration of environmental safety is not in the development of tourism, but in the fields of politics, the economy and society, which together must first create safe conditions for the development of tourism in an environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the global health crisis as a security threat has hit global tourism and travel particularly hard. When security threats occur at or near tourist destinations, this is generally reflected in a decline in the number of tourist arrivals in the wider area of influence. However, if the security threat is global, the imbalances in global tourism are even more affected. The reason for this is mainly information networking, which can transmit information from one end of the world to the other in real-time. Thus, information on escalating security threats reached potential tourists' homes in real-time and discourages them from making a travel decision (Kurež, 2011). A characteristic of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a global security crisis, is also the stringent action taken by countries regarding movement, border crossings, and closure of service activities, which hinders most tourism activities.

Global security threats, such as a pandemic, do not arise on their own but are a product of the security environment and its instability, which in COVID-19 is reflected in the development of individual health sys-

tems. International measures and proactive action will need to be taken to prevent and limit global health crises. As Kurež (2011) notes, the international community has many resources at its disposal to deal with security threats in tourism. The risks and threats need to be identified first, followed by risk and threat management. Proposals for security improvements should be based on an audit of the existing situation, which requires a thorough and in-depth analysis of vulnerabilities and security risks exposures, both internally and externally. Global risk management refers not only to the coherence of international measures but also to the understanding of individual countries' responsibilities to limit or counteract the security threat (Ivanuša et al., 2012).

An important element in threat management is how tourists perceive the threats and what tourists' characteristics affect their threat perception. We will turn to this question in the next sub-section.

Perceived Threats and Travel Research

In travel research, risk perception has long been recognised as one of the main predictors of travel intentions, with early research focusing on the topic of general risk perception (see e.g. Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a) and becoming more case-focused in the last millennium. Risk perception is often researched in the context of destination image, with perceived safety being one of the common indicators of overall destination image measures (e.g. Karl, 2018b; Kim et al., 2019; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013; Tsiotsou et al., 2010).

Health-related risk perception, however, has received a relatively smaller focus in travel research to date. Yang & Nair (2014) performed a content analysis of 46 articles on risk and perceived risk. Out of the 46 articles, only one was specifically focused on health risks: Atherton and Wilks (1994), while not including risk perceptions. From 42 risk factors involved in travel identified by Mitchell & Vassos (1998) in their 'classic' study, none was related to health risks. At the time, the terrorism and sociocultural risk emerged as the most significant predictors of travel anxiety, with health risks remaining in the background (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005).

As Seabra et al. (2013) point out, the past 50 years of study on risk perception reveal difficulties in operationalising this concept, mostly because risk perceptions are specific to each situation, and should therefore be evaluated using measurement instruments appropriate to the decision-making context. Twenty years ago, Sönmez and Graefe (1998a) tested which types of risk are most often associated with tourism to specific destinations. These were financial, psychological, satisfaction, and time risks. Resinger and Mavondo (2005) defined perceived risk as one's perceptions of the uncertainty and negative consequences of buying and consuming traveling services and at the destination.

Perceived health risks were measured with one item: 'possibility of becoming sick while travelling or at destination' (measured on a 7-point scale; 1 = none; 7 = very high). In their study it showed to be a part of a common factor named 'health and financial risk' including also physical, financial and functional risk perceptions – reflecting the relative lesser importance of health-related risks in the overall perception of travel risks and its measurements.

Health-related risks were in the past thus analysed primarily through the prism of becoming sick while travelling – what Hunter-Jones et al. (2008) termed 'everyday types' of health hazards while travelling. It was only after the foot and mouth disease outbreak affecting livestock in the UK (Frisby, 2003; Sharpley & Craven, 2001), and SARS and the bird flu epidemics (Mao et al., 2010) that the fear of pandemics, or 'crisis health hazards' (Hunter-Jones et al., 2008) started to be more prominently recognised in travel research. Both Seabra et al., (2013) and Yang & Nair (2014), for example, mention 'fear of pandemics,' 'health threats such as influenza' or 'a number of major tragedies, including the SARS outbreak' as main arguments as to why risk perception should be analysed in travel research, but do not include any measures in their research. Perceived threat is also recognised as one of the main independent variables affecting one's risk aversive behaviour in relation to the SARS pandemic (Brug et al., 2009; Smith, 2006; Vartti et al., 2009). The analysis of SARS-specific travel literature (Aro et al., 2009; Moreira, 2004, 2008; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009;

Zeng et al., 2005) shows that more specific measures regarding perceived threats and pandemics were included, yet remained only at the level of comparing one disease against another. For example, Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009) included questions on perceived risks for three types of disease: SARS, bird flu, and anthrax, but did not include a more in-depth measure of perceived risks related to these types of disease.

What the COVID-19 pandemic calls for at the moment are more specific analyses of the extent to which COVID-19 is perceived as a health risk and how this affects travel intentions. In order to analyse risk perception of COVID-19 in more depth, we turned to measures in the promotion of health behaviour. While travel research recognises the importance of communicating safety information to travellers (Abrams et al., 2020; Wang & Lopez, 2020), COVID-19 reflects a globally unprecedented need for public health risk communication of which we are currently witnessing the first analyses (Abrams et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

An important area of research is so-called threat or fear appeals (Dillard & Li, 2020; Yuen et al., 2020) with disease being a common threat in public-fears appeals such as anti-smoking campaigns (Pechmann et al., 2003). Following the protection motivation theory (Floyd et al., 2000; Rogers, 1975) and the extended parallel process model (Maloney et al., 2011; Witte, 1992) we can identify what Seabra et al. (2013) term a more context-specific, more in-depth definition and measurement of risk perception in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rogers (1975) was amongst the first to identify the two dimensions of perceived threat: (a) the magnitude of noxiousness of a depicted event ('Severity of the threat') and (b) the probability of that event's occurrence ('Susceptibility or vulnerability to the threat'). In the current research we build on Witte's (1992) operationalisation of the two dimensions (see the Methods section) and are primarily interested in the differences of the two dimensions of perceived threat according to travel experiences, gender, age, and education and how this correlates with future travel intentions of Slovenian travellers.

Travel Intentions and Perceived Threat According to Age, Travel Experience, Gender and Education

The literature review within tourism studies shows that various individuals perceive travel risk differently and react to it in distinctive ways (Garg & Kumar, 2017; Karl, 2018a, 2018b; Yang & Nair, 2014), especially when from different cultural backgrounds (Le Serre et al., 2013; Matyas et al., 2011; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Qi et al., 2009; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006a, 2006b; Vartti et al., 2009).

Furthermore, even within the same nation or age group, tourists are heterogeneous in terms of their risk perception (Karl, 2018b; Seabra et al., 2013; Wantono & McKercher, 2020). While risk is generally studied as a factor that increases risk aversive behaviour, it is important also to note that for some people risk includes higher motivation to seek risky behaviour – a point of research covered especially within the area of sensation-seeking personality traits and tourism (Lepp & Gibson, 2003, 2008; Pizam et al., 2001, 2004). For example, Gibson and Jordan (1998a, 1998b) found that solo women tourists take calculated risks while traveling in order to gain a sense of empowerment and adventure.

In terms of demographic factors, risk perception is related to factors such as life stage, gender, nationality, education, and social class (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Karl, 2018b; Lepp & Gibson, 2003, 2008; Matyas et al., 2011; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Pizam et al., 2014, 2004; Qi et al., 2009; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a, 1998b). Yang and Nair's (2014) study deals with 15 internal factors that can influence tourists' risk perception, categorised into four dimensions: sociocultural, socio-demographic, psychographic and biological. Nationality and past experience were found to be the most significant factors shaping tourists' risk perception.

Regarding age, Sönmez and Graefe (1998a) found that age did not influence an individual's perception of travel-related risk, which was also confirmed by the work of Garg and Kumar (2017). However, Gibson & Yiannakis (2002) found that preference for risk-related tourism tended to decrease with age. These were the results of many other researches as well (Ha-

jibaba et al., 2015; Hallahan et al., 2004; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Pizam et al., 2004; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006a, 2006b; Williams & Baláž, 2013). Williams and Baláž (2013) highlight that the general health and safety factor tended to be significantly more important for older people.

With age, riskier travel forms decrease and are explored within the non-institutionalised forms of tourism, such as travel of 'explorers and drifters' (Cohen, 1973), backpacking (Carr, 2001; Elsrud, 2001) and budget travelling (Riley, 1988). Hajibaba et al. (2015) found that tourists who are extremely resistant to risk are generally younger than other tourists with a more risk-averse behaviour. According to Pizam et al. (2001, 2004), young males showed more propensity for spontaneous vacations and are more adventurous. Higher age groups are more dominant in risk- and uncertainty-averse tourist types (Karl, 2018b).

However, there are large differences even within the same age groups, and non-institutionalised tourism styles are not homogeneous in terms of risk perceptions. Kozak et al. (2007) found that older experienced male travellers were less likely to change their travel plans when faced with potential terrorism, health, or natural disaster related risks. Williams and Baláž (2013, pp. 22–23) found that 'package tourists were more likely to be relatively younger (and therefore to have young children), while explorers are likely to be relatively older.' Organised mass tourists and independent mass tourists are generally more concerned about health risks than tourists engaging in non-institutionalised forms of tourism (Lepp & Gibson, 2003).

Another important factor affecting travel risk perception is travel experience, with the most experienced tourists perceiving less risk (Hajibaba et al., 2015; Karl, 2018b; Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003, 2008; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Qi et al., 2009; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a, 1998b). The survey of Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, 1998b) showed that previous visits to a destination considered risky were associated with greater likelihood of avoiding these in future, but Lepp and Gibson (2003) found positive relationships between travel experience and preference for destinations with higher risks.

Regarding gender and risk perception, the results are mixed. Although the research of Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, 1998b) showed no influence, other studies concluded that gender does influence travel risk perception and risk-aversive behaviour while travelling (Carr, 2001; Darley & Smith, 1995; Elsrud, 2001; Garg & Kumar, 2017; Hawes, 1988; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Matyas et al., 2011; McGehee et al., 1996; Mitchell & Vassos, 1998; Pizam et al., 2004; Qi et al., 2009; Reichel et al., 2007; Squire, 1994; Williams & Baláž, 2013; Yang & Nair, 2014). Lepp and Gibson (2008) concluded that gender is only significant for subcategories of risk that may disrupt a holiday (i.e. strangeness of food) but not for life-threatening risk factors. According to Byrnes et al. (1999) men are more risk tolerant in 14 out of 16 observed types of risk behaviour and Boksberger et al. (2007) showed that women have been found to be more likely to be concerned about physical risks in tourism. Thus, in general, women are often shown as not as willing to take risks as men are (Garg & Kumar, 2017; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Matyas et al., 2011; Pizam et al., 2004; Wantono & McKercher, 2020; Williams & Baláž, 2013), where risk aversion depends on the specific situation. In Lepp and Gibson's (2003) study, the results have shown that amongst most travel styles, men generally perceived less risk of terrorism than women, with one exception. The so-called 'drifters' group of travellers showed the opposite results – here women perceived less risk than men. On the other hand, Williams and Baláž (2013, p. 22) found that 'drifters were more likely to be men, which is consistent with their greater risk and uncertainty tolerance.'

With respect to health risks, Mattila et al. (2001) found gender differences in perceived health risk. According to Kozak et al. (2007), female tourists are more concerned about risks in terms of infectious diseases, terrorist attacks and natural disasters than male tourists. Lepp and Gibson (2003) reported that men are less concerned about health and food-related risks than women. Literature from the field of disease prevention showed that after the SARS outbreak, women reported higher perceptions of risk than men (Brug et al., 2004). Lau et al.'s (2004) investigation of SARS in

connection to preventive and risk behaviours showed that male travellers were much less likely to be using masks or washing their hands frequently.

An important warning about gender as a factor affecting risk perception is the fact that it is often only representative of other more comprehensive and in-depth differences. Carr (2001), for example, points out that other factors, such as personality type, are probably more influential on an individual's travel risk perception than gender per se.

Finally, many authors confirm that tourists' perceptions of travel risks vary depending on education (Chang, 2010; Hallahan et al., 2004; Karl, 2018b; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a; Williams & Baláž, 2013). Generally, the results show that higher-educated tourists perceive lower travel risk than less-educated tourists (Garg & Kumar, 2017; Halek & Eisenhauer, 2001; Hallahan et al., 2004). Williams and Baláž (2013) concluded that package tourists had relatively lower educational qualifications, while explorers and drifters had higher qualifications.

The research performed in Germany (Karl, 2018a, 2018b) has shown that high educational levels and high travel frequencies are distinct characteristics of risk-affine tourists. Garg and Kumar (2017) showed that tourists' decision-making is influenced by their risk-perception level in relation with socio-cultural factors and media influence. Park and Reisinger (2010) postulate that tourists with low educational attainment perceive a greater influence of social risk than high- and middle-educated tourists perhaps because they have relatively fewer social skills and are less confident about their vacation choice. Higher-educated tourists are likely to be more informed regarding natural disasters and travel risks and hold fewer misconceptions about the real risk than less-educated individuals (Laver et al., 2006). Similarly, Brug et al.'s (2004) survey of SARS conducted in the Netherlands has shown that people with less education expressed more worries about the disease.

In the remainder of this study we focus on how age, travel experience, gender and education affect COVID-19 threat perceptions and future travel risk avoidance amongst the sample of the Slovenian population.

Methods

Questionnaire

We used an on-line questionnaire (open from 17th March to 11th April 2020) that addressed variables for perceived threat, travel experience and future travel avoidance, and standard demographic variables. We adjusted the perceived threat measures from the extended parallel process model (Witte, 1992; Witte & Morrison, 2000) with 3 questions measuring perceived severity dimension and 4 questions measuring susceptibility or vulnerability dimension (see Table 3). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We measured travel experience with three numerical questions, for example 'How many times a year have you on average gone on vacation (for 5 days or more) in the last three years?' Finally, we measured future travel intentions or travel avoidance as the extent to which the participants express planned travel avoidance after the COVID-19 lock-down measures.

Population, Sample and Source of Data

The data were collected from a convenience sample of respondents (N = 428), which is an acceptable form of data collection in tourism (Carr, 2001). The survey was made among residents of Slovenia, asking them about the new SARS-COV-2 virus and their perception of possibilities of self-isolation and traveling. Table 1 represents the sample we have collected; next to the information in Table 1 we have also calculated the average age of respondents was 32.7 years, some 10 years lower than the national average.

Data Acquisition and Analyses

We processed the acquired data in Microsoft Excel 2013 and IBM SPSS v.23. For simple data analysis we used Excel's built-in functions, such as counting individual responses, calculating percentages, and calculating mean values. IBM SPSS version 23 was used for statistical analyses. The threshold for rejecting a null hypothesis was set at α = 0.05. The correlations between dependent and independent variables were calculated using Spearman's Rho and differences between respondents' views based on parameters was calculated using the Kruskal-Wallis H test.

Table 1 Sample Demographic

Variable		*n*	%
Gender	Male	97	27.1
	Female	261	72.9
Level of education	Secondary education or lower*	124	35.3
	Higher professional education	51	14.5
	University education	98	27.9
	Post graduate education	75	21.4
	Do not want to disclose	3	0.9

Notes * Post-secondary, pre-university.

Table 2 Factor Analysis – Total Variance Explained – Perceived Threats

(1)	(2)			(3)			(4)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)	
1	3.012	43.022	43.022	2.560	36.568	36.568	2.322
2	1.416	20.235	63.257	0.945	13.499	50.067	1.805
3	0.772	11.030	74.287				
4	0.627	8.956	83.243				
5	0.502	7.177	90.421				
6	0.399	5.694	96.115				
7	0.272	3.885	100.000				

Notes Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Column headings are as follows: (1) factor, (2) initial eigenvalues, (3) extraction sums of squared loadings, (4) rotation sums of squared loadings (when factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance), (a) total, (b) percentage of variance, (c) cumulative percentage.

Results

First, we tested the reliability of the collected data measuring the three main variables: perceived susceptibility of threat, perceived severity of threat and future travel avoidance (see Tables 3 and 5 for the exact items) by calculating the value of Cronbach's alpha. The value was 0.837 and this represents an acceptable reliability (Cronbach, 1951), which suggests that the 'measures were free from random error and thus reliability coefficients estimate the amount of systematic variance' (Churchill, 1979, p. 4).

Factor Analysis

We have performed a factor analysis on both sets of variables (perceived threats, future travel intentions) separately. First, we performed factor analysis on variables that have measured perceived threat levels amongst respondents. As seen from Table 2 and Table 3, there are two distinctive factors found. In line with past research (Witte, 1994) the first factor was 'susceptibility to threat' (explains 36.57% of variability). Again, in line with past research, the second factor was 'severity of threat' (explaining an additional 13.50% of variability). With both factors together we were able to explain 50.07% of variability of perceived threats.

The analysis of the mean value on each of the items shows that in general people perceive a relatively high probability that they themselves or their loved ones could fall sick to the COVID-19 disease (perceived susceptibility). Regarding the perceived severity, however, the mean values are lower, with the survey participants generally perceiving lesser gravity of the disease. There is an important exception, though: the indicators measuring perceived threat to oneself versus the indicators measuring perceived threat to one's loved ones show that survey participants generally perceive the COVID-19 more endangering the people that we love rather than ourselves, which is probably also a reflection of the relatively young sample. These results, however, indicate that the moral obligation towards taking care of others might be a highly important element in the success factor of COVID-19 measures. The results are in line with similar research, for example on effectiveness of antismoking campaigns (Goldman & Glantz, 1998).

Next, we have performed factor analysis on variables measuring future travel avoidance. As seen from Table 4 and Table 5, all the variables have positioned themselves in one factor, named 'Future travel avoidance.' With this factor we can explain 40.59% of variability of future travel intentions. The items we introduced to measure future travel avoidance are a relatively reliable scale for measuring this variable. The lowest travel avoidance is somewhat surprisingly measured with the item 'In the future I will no longer attend crowded events due to the fear of the new coron-

Table 3 Factor Analysis on the Group of Variables Measuring Perceived Threats

Factor	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
1 Perceived threat: Susceptibility (36.57% variability explained)	It is highly likely that I myself will fall sick with the new cor. disease.	0.891	2.62	1.136
	It is highly likely that my loved ones will fall sick with the new cor. disease.	0.773	3.12	1.052
	I myself am at risk of contracting the new coronavirus disease.	0.739	2.76	1.200
2 Perceived threat: Severity (13.50% variability explained)	The new coronavirus disease is extremely dangerous to one's health.	0.796	2.21	1.193
	The new coronavirus disease has a high mortality rate.	0.631	1.99	1.062
	The new coronavirus disease is not curable.	0.496	1.67	1.016
	My loved ones are at great risk of dying from the new coronavirus disease.	0.356	3.14	1.353

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) factor value, (2) mean value, (3) standard deviation. Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalization (rotation converged in 5 iterations).

Table 4 Factor Analysis – Total Variance Explained – Future Travel Intentions

(1)	(2)			(3)		
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)
1	3.372	48.173	48.173	2.841	40.593	40.593
2	0.994	14.203	62.376			
3	0.815	11.636	74.012			
4	0.632	9.034	83.046			
5	0.506	7.234	90.281			
6	0.370	5.285	95.565			
7	0.310	4.435	100.000			

Notes Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Column headings are as follows: (1) factor, (2) initial eigenvalues, (3) extraction sums of squared loadings, (a) total, (b) percentage of variance, (c) cumulative percentage.

avirus.' Gathering with others was something the participants perceived as least likely they will give up in the future. This might indicate good news for future event management. The highest travel avoidance is measured with the item 'Once the problems are over, I will travel extensively in order to make up for the lost time.' This item, however, next to being reversely coded, also had the lowest factor value.

A deeper analysis of mean values per item shows that on average survey participants' travel avoidance, when calculated in an index (average of all items) performs very similarly to a normal distribution (see Table 6). The mean value of index of future travel avoidance is 2.51 on a 5-point scale. In other words, we cannot easily predict how the general population will behave regarding their future travel avoidance since at the time of the results there was only a slight tendency for the participants to answer more often that they will not avoid future travel. It is thus important to analyse the differences in travel avoidance according to other variables to be better able to predict which groups of future travellers are those that will more likely and/or sooner be travelling again.

After performing the factor analysis, we have made an index for each of the three variables (the sum of all the items measuring the same variable) and performed basic descriptive statistics on newly formed indexes. In Table 6 we can see that the highest mean value (2.83) is for 'Susceptibility of threat,' followed by 'Future travel avoidance' (mean value 2.51) and 'Severity of threat' (mean value 2.22). In the continuation of the paper we will analyse the effects of age, gender, education, and travel experience on the three variables: susceptibility of threat, severity of threat and future travel avoidance. Since distribution is not parametric based on the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < 0.005$), we are further treating the variables as non-parametric and using adequate statistical tests.

Differences Based on Age

We first investigated correlations between the three dependent variables 'susceptibility of threat,' 'severity of threat' and 'future travel avoidance' and the independent variable 'age of respondents.' We have

Table 5 Factor Analysis on the Group of Variables Measuring Future Travel Intentions

Factor	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Future travel avoidance (40.59% variability explained)	I will be avoiding travelling abroad for at least a year.	0.782	2.14	1.266
	I will prefer to stay home this summer as a precaution and not go on any vacations.	0.751	2.04	1.268
	If travelling I will avoid public transportation.	0.705	2.62	1.387
	In the future I will no longer attend crowded events due to the fear of the new coronav.	0.637	1.79	1.107
	I will have no prob. about using planes, buses or trains as they will be safe again soon.*	0.601	2.65	1.292
	This year I will rather look for holiday possibilities within my own country.	0.575	2.66	1.308
	Once the problems are over, I will travel extensively in order to make up for lost time.*	0.266	2.91	1.371

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) factor value, (2) mean value, (3) standard deviation. * Reversely coded. Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalization (rotation converged in 5 iterations).

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of Indexes of the Factors Gained from Factor Analysis

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Susceptibility of threat	409	2.83	0.974	0.089	0.121	−0.438	0.241
Severity of threat	399	2.22	0.830	0.569	0.122	−0.117	0.244
Future travel avoidance	313	2.51	0.604	0.633	0.138	0.543	0.275

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) skewness, (5) standard error of skewness, (6) kurtosis, (7) standard error of Kurtosis.

Table 7 Spearman's Correlation Coefficient of Correlation between Age and Three Variables

Variable	Correlation with age		
	Both	Man	Woman
Susceptibility of threat	0.158**	0.088 ($p = 0.397$)	0.188**
Severity of threat	0.202**	0.056 ($p = 0.592$)	0.253**
Future travel avoidance	0.107 ($p = 0.061$)	−0.087 ($p = 0.420$)	0.184**

Notes ** $p \leq 0.01$.

used Spearman's correlation for this analysis. Table 7 shows that two out of three factors show statistically significant correlations to age of respondents. Older respondents evaluate susceptibility to threat higher than younger respondents; they also evaluate severity of threat higher than younger respondents, while age does not correlate with future travel intentions when both genders are included in the analysis. Since correlations made for both genders together were relatively weak, we have decided to see if there are any additional differences with regards to difference in gender. We have determined that within the group of male respondents there is no statistically significant correlation with any of the three factors; however, within the group of female respondents correlation is now seen with all three factors. The results are thus only partly in line with the literature review. As in previous research, both threat perception and travel avoidance are affected by age – yet in our research this is confirmed only for women.

Differences Based on Past Travel Experience

We have furthermore analysed correlations between the variable 'future travel avoidance' after the COVID-19 crisis (see Table 6 for exact items, index was calculated as mean scores) and the three items measuring travel experience (see Table 8 for exact items). We have used Spearman's correlation for this analysis. Results are shown in Table 8. In accordance with expectations from the literature review, one of the three items for travel experience showed a statistically significant neg-

Table 8 Spearman's Correlation Coefficient among Variables 'Travel Experience' and 'Future Travel Avoidance'

Travel exp. in the past 5 years	Future travel avoidance
Number of holiday travels*	−0.153**
Number of international travels	−0.103 ($p = 0.073$)
Number of air flights	−0.051 ($p = 0.375$)

Notes * For 5 days or more. ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 9 Analysis of Differences among Males and Females on Susceptibility and Severity of Threat and Future Travel Avoidance

Variable	z	p	Mean rank	
			Male	Female
Susceptibility of threat	−1.171	0.241	162.94	176.88
Severity of threat	−1.568	0.117	156.59	175.15
Future travel avoidance	−0.537	0.567	151.40	157.84

Table 10 Analysis of Differences on Susceptibility and Severity of Threat and Future Travel Avoidance Based on Education

Variable	H	p	(1)	(2)
Susceptibility of threat	17.083	0.001	(a)	140.02
			(b)	182.13
			(c)	181.99
			(d)	198.95
Severity of threat	8.566	0.036	(a)	144.63
			(b)	179.06
			(c)	175.65
			(d)	175.46
Travel avoidance	1.735	0.629	(a)	145.88
			(b)	160.77
			(c)	147.73
			(d)	160.26

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) level of education, (2) mean rank. Row headings are as follows: (a) secondary education or lower, (b) higher professional education, (c) university education, (d) postgraduate education.

ative correlation ($p \leq 0.05$) with future travel avoidance. The results thus show that people who have travelled the most in the past will be the ones who also express the least likelihood of avoidance of travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Differences between Gender

Further, we tested for differences between respondents' views based on gender. As we can see from Table 9, even though women evaluate the variable higher than men in all three cases, the differences are not statistically significant. The results are thus again in line with the literature review: while women are often said to perceive more threat, the differences are not shown in every research and are generally not as significant as they are for age.

Differences Based on Education

Finally, we also tested if there are any statistically significant differences between respondents' views based on their level of education. Results are shown in Table 10. Regarding future travel avoidance, the results show no significant differences. However, from Table 10 we can see that there are statistically significant differences on both dimensions of perceived threat. On the dimension susceptibility of threat there is a statistically significant difference ($H = 17.083$, $p = 0.001$) among various levels of education. The lowest mean rank has respondents with secondary education or lower (mean rank 140.02) and the highest those with post graduate education (mean rank 198.95). Similarly, severity of threat is also statistically significantly different between the differently-educated groups of participants ($H = 8.566$, $p = 0.036$). The group with secondary education or lower has evaluated this factor lowest (mean rank 144.63) whilst the group with highest evaluation is the one with Higher professional education (mean rank 179.06). Compared with the literature review, however, these results are surprising. Namely, higher-educated persons tend to accept more risk and thus their susceptibility to threat is lower. But with COVID-19, higher-educated people feel that they are more susceptible to threat, and they also perceive that the threat is more severe. More future research is needed to analyse the reasons for the differences in

education. We can only speculate that the differences are a result of different information sources between the differently-educated groups. With regards to travel avoidance we did not discover any statistically significant differences between education levels.

Discussion, Limitations and Further Research Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unpreceded event that shook global tourism industry to its core. It is too early to reliably say what kind of effects it will have for the future of tourism. The present study cannot provide answers to the questions of when and how tourists will be willing to travel again. Rather, it provides a snapshot of Slovenian tourists' perceptions in a historically unique point of time – the early days of the COVID-19-related lockdown. The value of the study is thus primarily in its analytical insight in the situation-specific state of tourists' perceived threats, how this depends on their demography and what they in this specific point in time think about their future travel avoidance.

As such, the study first has a methodological merit: to our knowledge this was the first study that developed a scale of perceived threat of COVID-19 on the two dimensions of severity and vulnerability. Perceived threat is a variable that is very context specific. In the past, travel research primarily focused on comparing several types of threats and providing only very general measures of health-related risks. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is a specific situation that called for a more in-depth analysis of perceived threat. To achieve this, we have built on literature on health-related fear appeals in order to develop a scale that showed to be context specific, reliable and in-depth.

Similarly, the merit of the present study is the development of a scale for measuring one's expressions of future travel avoidance due to COVID-19. As with perceived threat, this variable, too, showed to include a reliable set of indicators, all showing one dimension of future travel avoidance. However, an important limitation of measuring future travel avoidance is its dependence on actual behaviour control – which is mostly not in the hands of the tourists but is rather an issue of policy regulation and how the disease will spread in the future. Future travel avoidance is a measure of what people expect about the future, and not a measure of actual future behaviour. Therefore, it cannot be used as a valid predictor of actual future travels. It can, however, point to important early considerations.

The OECD (2020), World Tourism Organization (2020) and the European Commission (2020) recently published guidelines regarding tourism recovery after COVID-19. Common amongst these are three basic proposals that seem to be supported by the present research: providing health assurances to the tourists, promoting domestic tourism, and targeting younger tourists and those who have travelled more in the past.

First, the Slovenian early sample shows that people will be relatively highly susceptible to the context-specific factors that will affect their decisions, such as assurances of health measures. The European Commission (2020) highlights the importance of updated and easily accessible information to travellers in order to be reassured that public health and safety rules are respected. Our results show that we cannot easily predict how the general population will behave regarding their future travel avoidance since at the time of the results most participants were not on either of the two extremes of the opinion. However, while we cannot predict whether this means they will be more willing or less willing to travel in the future, it does mean that the general opinion might be highly susceptible to the context of the future. Extreme opinions are those that are the most difficult to change. The common sets of health standards and assurances of health safety in the after-COVID-19 scenarios are thus likely to fall on appreciative ears.

Second, a common assumption regarding the recovery of tourism is to focus on domestic tourists. For Slovenian tourism it is thus of highest importance that in general the data shows that the survey participants are slightly more inclined to intend travel domestically in the near future. Therefore, the support to domestic travel such as tourism vouchers, a focus on 'local gems' and general short-term localisation of tourism seem to be supported by the current data.

Third, the data supports the general proposals that younger tourists and those with more travel experience are those who should be primarily targeted in the recovery attempts. The results have shown that age af-

fects the two dimensions of perceived threat and future travel avoidance, but only with women. Men, on the other hand, do not seem to be affected by age differences, nor are there significant differences in gender in general. The results furthermore unsurprisingly show that people who have travelled the most in the past will be the ones who also express the least likelihood of avoidance of travel due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Contrary to the above three main research results, the current data also provides two unexpected and thus important research conclusions: the first is perception of threat in relation to education and the second is perception of threat in relation to one's moral position.

The results on perception of threat in relation to education are surprising compared to past research on risk perception in tourism studies. Past research generally showed that higher-educated persons tend to accept more risk. But with COVID-19, higher-educated people in the Slovenian sample feel that they are more susceptible to threat, and they also perceive the threat is more severe. Future research is needed to analyse the reasons for the differences in education. At the moment, we can only speculate that the differences are probably a result of different information sources between the differently-educated groups. This does mean, however, that the higher-educated tourists are those who perceive higher risk and are thus those who will pay more attention to health standards and health-related assurances. Such standards and assurances thus need to be prepared with the highest caution and information support for concerned tourists.

Finally, the analysis showed that in general the survey participants perceive COVID-19 as a disease more endangering to the people that they love rather than themselves. More research is needed; however, these results show that the moral obligation towards taking care of others might be of utmost importance in the success factor of COVID-19 measures for policy makers and the tourism industry. In future persuasive appeals on COVID-19-related threats, appealing to the safety of one's loved ones might show to be the most effective.

Future research is needed in order to assess how threat perception and future travel avoidance differ in later points in time and in other national contexts. Specifically, as the restrictions ease and new measures are being introduced such as, for example, spatial distancing on beaches and during transportation, more research is needed on how risk perception is related to perception of pleasure and travel value and to what extent these might be perceived as lowered due to the COVID-19-related measures. Additionally, more research is needed on how different generations differ regarding COVID-19 threat perception and especially why there seem to be generational differences amongst women, while not amongst men. The issue of moral stance (taking care of others) in relation to COVID-19 might have an important role in the future – more research is needed on how effective are appeals on safety to one's health and health for one's loved ones. And especially, how this moral stance might relate to the issues of sustainable tourism of the future. Finally, the roles of information sources and social class need to be analysed in the future in order to provide the answers as to why in relation to COVID-19 the more educated perceive more risk than the less educated.

Just as the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States forever changed our understanding of security in international tourism, and we adapted to the consequences in the form of increased controls at airports, so will the COVID-19 global health crisis bring forth changes in the way international travel and transport are conducted. New security protocols will be implemented at airports, hotels, and border crossings. The new security protocols will become part of international security standards. After every security crisis so far tourists returned to their destinations as soon as the threat was eliminated. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, we hopefully expect that 'tourists have a bad memory' about security threats, as claimed (McKercher & Huij, 2003) and that tourism will blossom again when conditions calm down and safety measures are transformed in a way that they allow safe travelling again.

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Original Scientific Article

Tourism and Economic Growth Nexus in Latin America and Caribbean Countries: Evidence from an Autoregressive Distributed Lag Panel

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This research focuses on tourism as a way to stimulate economic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean countries. The impact of tourism on economic growth was expected to have both short- and long-run effects. Panel autoregressive distributed lag, an econometric technique that allows for this temporal decomposition, was used. The results for the twenty-two countries revealed that, in the short-run, tourist capital investment per capita, tourist arrivals (number of persons), per capita electricity consumption, and the real exchange rate were statistically significant and had a positive impact on economic growth. In contrast, in the long-run, only tourist arrivals and per capita electricity consumption proved to be positive drivers of per capita economic growth. Policymakers should continue to develop and implement measures to attract as many tourists as possible while promoting investment in the tourism industry. However, they also need to pay attention to other economic sectors so that their countries do not become extremely dependent on tourism activity.

Keywords: capital investment, tourism arrivals, economic growth, Latin America and Caribbean, ARDL

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Introduction

Although the economic activity of Latin America and Caribbean countries is still recovering from the impacts of various economic and social crises, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated that after 2017 the region's economic growth increased by 1.3%, 1.6% in 2018, and 2019 it is expected to increase by 2.6% (International Monetary Fund, 2018). These results could mean that these countries can rapidly increase their growth rates. The primary motivation for the achievement of this study was the fact that tourism is a sector in development and has an essential role in the economic growth of this region. Thus, corroborating with World Travel Market (2018), the number of foreign tourists arriving in Latin America increased by 6% in the previous five years. Moreover, the World Travel and Tourism Council (2018) estimates point to the fact that the travel and tourism sector recently contributed to 15.2% of the Caribbean Gross Domestic Product, region which is included in the group of countries that we will use in our investigation.

Given the facts previously stated, the characteristics of this region and the particular interest points, tourism becomes quite relevant. Being a fast-growing sector, it is crucial to verify if more tourists and investment (as well as, their efficiency) lead to an increase in economic benefits of Latin American and Caribbean countries. Thus, this theme should continue to be studied.

The impact of tourism on economic growth is an extensively explored theme in the economic growth literature. However, few studies use panel methodology to study the impacts of this sector on the growth of the Latin America and Caribbean region.

In our study, we used 22 countries from the Latin America and Caribbean region, with annual data ranging from 1995 to 2014. The autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model was used in our empirical investigation mainly because it supports variables with different orders of integration and gives robust results with small samples. Though the ARDL model, we evaluate the impacts that tourism intensity and tourism capital investment have on the economic growth of Latin America and Caribbean countries on both the short and that long run. To reach this objective, we used annual data on Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDPPC), which is our proxy for economic growth, and on tourism arrivals per capita (TAPC) and tourism capital investment per capita (TIPC) in order to represent the tourism sector.

The main goal of this study is to answer the central question: 'What are the impacts of tourism intensity and tourism capital investment on the economic growth of Latin America and Caribbean countries?' Given the central question of our study, we can construct the two following hypotheses.

- H1 Tourism intensity has a positive impact on economic growth, *given that it contributes to employment creation and stimulates the economic activity of the Latin America and Caribbean countries.*
- H2 Capital investment has a positive impact on economic growth, *given that it contributes to the construction of new infrastructure, technological progress, and innovation in Latin America and Caribbean countries.*

In this research, we will attempt to confirm (or not) the validity of these hypotheses as we simultaneously attempt to contribute to the enlargement of the literature on this field.

This study is organised as follows. The second section presents literature reviews about the tourism-economic growth nexus. The third describes the data, methodology, and preliminary tests. The fourth section presents the results and discussion, and the fifth section concludes the study.

Literature Review

In this section, essential aspects will be discussed in the literature on tourism economics, focusing on the way tourism relates to the economy and addressing specific aspects of tourism in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Revisiting Tourism and Economy

The relationship between tourism development and economic growth has been studied widely in recent years (e.g., Cannonier & Burke, 2019; Belucio et al., 2018; Brida, Lanzilotta & Pizzolon, 2016; Du et al.,

2016; Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Tugcu, 2014) given that the results from this relationship can help some countries to develop effective growth strategies for their economies.

The supply of foreign currency, the promotion of investment, in both infrastructure and human capital, and the jobs that this sector creates are some of the significant benefits from international tourism that can produce positive effects on a country's economic growth. Moreover, following Blake et al. (2016), tourism has an essential role on the increase of the average income of a country, as well as in the increase of both the efficiency and competitiveness of the economies.

Malta et al. (2019) analysed the context that enabled the creation of a vision that attributes to tourism the capacity to reduce poverty. According to the World Tourism Organization (2015), in 2014, one in every eleven jobs around the world was created by the tourism sector, which demonstrates the weight that this sector has on the worldwide economy.

Given the facts previously stated, it is natural that the relationship between tourism and growth has an extensive branch of literature about it. Lanza and Pigliaru (2000) were the pioneers of the investigation of the relationship between these two variables. In their work, they concluded that the countries specialised in tourism shared features, such as tourist destinations of small geographical size, where the average per capita income proliferated.

Moving forward, the analysis of the relationship between tourism and economic growth has at least four hypotheses that can be easily identified in the literature: growth hypothesis also called the tourism-led growth hypothesis (TLGH or TLG): conservation hypothesis; feedback hypothesis; and neutrality hypothesis (e.g., Dogru & Bulut, 2018). These hypotheses appear in the majority of the causality tests related to economic growth, mainly in energy economics. Nevertheless, this group of hypotheses can be reformulated and used in tourism analysis.

The TLGH, as the name implies, state that tourism development stimulates economic growth: the tourist arrivals and the revenues generated by the tourism sector have a positive impact on economic growth. This hypothesis is supported by the majority of the authors that focus their works on the assessment of this relationship (e.g., Shahzad et al., 2017; Tugcu, 2014; Husein & Kara, 2011; Cortes-Jimenez & Pulina, 2010).

Regarding the conservation hypothesis (e.g., Aslan, 2014; Payne & Mervar, 2010), while this hypothesis asserts that the economic output of a country can induce tourism development, it also suggests that deterioration on the economic performance of a country can significantly reduce its tourism demand.

Concerning the feedback hypothesis (e.g., Rivera, 2017; Al-mulali et al., 2014; Massidda & Mattana, 2013), it considers economic growth and tourism development to be complementary and strongly dependent. This hypothesis is the same as saying that economic growth promotes tourism development as well as the other way around.

Finally, the neutrality hypothesis (e.g., Katircioglu, 2009) suggests that there is no relationship between tourism development and economic growth: they are entirely independent. This hypothesis indicates that, for example, strategies for tourism development (e.g., investing in the tourism sector) do not produce direct effects on economic growth.

Besides these four hypotheses, there is an additional one: the curse hypothesis, or the beach disease effect (e.g., Holzner, 2011). This hypothesis can be defined as follows: countries in which the tourism sector plays a significant role in their economies (tourism-dependent countries) tend to grow less than the others do.

Turning to the methodological part of the works on the tourism-growth nexus, in the literature, many variables were used as tourism proxies. The most commonly used are international tourism revenues (e.g., Durbarry, 2004; Balaguer & Cantavella-Jordà, 2002), number of tourist arrivals (e.g., Zortuk, 2009; Gunduz & Hatemi-J, 2005), tourism specialization (e.g., Algieri, 2006), tourism industries (e.g., Tang & Shawn, 2009), and tourism spending (e.g., Nissan et al., 2011), for example. As expected, the variable Gross Domestic Product is the one that researchers use the most often to measure economic growth.

Regarding the empirical methodologies that are used to investigate the relationship between tourism

and economic growth, it can be emphasized that they differ from author to author. However, there are two main methodological approaches: panel data estimations, and time-series estimations. Brida et al. (2016) made a detailed review of the empirical methods that were applied in the literature close to this theme, and their advantages and disadvantages.

The panel data models are frequently preferred because they allow doing a simultaneous analysis of the cross-sectional and temporal dimensions. The panel Granger causality techniques (e.g., Belucio et al., 2018; Al-mulali et al., 2014) and the autoregressive distributed lag model (ARDL) (e.g., Katircioglu, 2009) are some of the estimation methods that are more frequently used in this type of studies.

The Region

Latin America has been experiencing significant changes in recent decades (Bianchi et al., 2018). Tourism has grown in most Latin American and Caribbean countries. Researchers and policymakers have long recognised the significance of tourism to the Caribbean region (Cannonier & Burke, 2019)

The region has two of the seven natural wonders of the world, and three of the seven wonders of the modern world. Tourism in the region has diversified effects, whether micro or macroeconomics. Garza and Ovalle (2019) argue that tourism-driven development affects the spatial distribution of prices and increasing daily transportation difficulties.

Focusing on the Latin America and Caribbean countries (LAC), we can refer that for these countries the tourism literature is quite extensive (e.g., Belucio et al., 2018; Risso & Brida, 2008; Brida et al., 2008; Eugenio-Martin et al., 2004). The conclusions of the works focused on the relationship between tourism and growth in this region, or in some countries of the LAC, predominantly support the TLGH. Before we conclude, we also should refer that the reasons cited in the literature to the differences in the study's results are mainly the fact that authors usually apply different empirical methodologies, and chose different periods and samples to be analysed (e.g., Dogru & Bulut, 2018).

Even though most of the studies show that tourism development has positive impacts on the economic output of the countries, the results are far from conclusive, and for that reason, we support the idea that this relationship should continue to be extensively studied.

The assessment of the impacts that tourism have on growth is especially crucial for the case of Latin America and Caribbean countries because they have a set of characteristics (e.g., cultural and natural wealth) that make them a choice destination for tourists from all over the world. However, tourism safety in Latin America has not evolved to the same level in all Latin American countries (Maximiliano, 2014).

Some of the critical factors that can deter tourists from a destination are the security of the destination and the exchange rate. Regarding the safety of tourists in Latin America, the central issue is related to local crime (Maximiliano, 2014). However, the development of sound public regulation can generate economic growth and benefits for tourism agents, which is reflected in improvements for the population (Belucio et al., 2018) and tourists.

The exchange rate plays an essential role in the lives of underdeveloped or in the development of tourist destinations. The inflow of foreign capital is responsible for economic growth, but policymakers often neglect the exchange rate policies (Dogru et al., 2019), which can have a significant impact on the trade balance. It is also known that the real effective exchange rate has significant effects on economic growth (Lee & Chang, 2008) and that exchange variation can benefit or hurt a tourist destination.

Data and Methodology

Our study is focused on the assessment of the impacts of tourism on the economic growth of a group of Latin America and Caribbean: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. For the present investigation, we will use annual data from 1995 to 2014. Both the time horizon and countries were chosen, given the available data. In this study, we used STATA 15.0 to perform our econometric analysis. In Table 1 the name, definition, and source of our variables are presented.

Table 1 Variables Description

Variable	Definition	Source
GDP	Gross Domestic Product in a constant local currency unit	World Bank
P	The total population in the total number of persons	World Bank
EPC	Electric power consumption in GWh	World Bank
TA	Tourism arrivals in the number of persons	World Bank
GDP_US	Gross Domestic Product in constant 2010 US$	World Bank
TI	Capital Investment in a constant local currency unit	World Travel & Tourism Council
TX	Real exchange rate	Author's calculation from the World Bank

The dependent variable will be Gross Domestic Product in constant local currency (GDP), our proxy for economic growth.

To measure tourism intensity, the ratio of the tourism arrivals (TA), by the total population (P) was used. The tourism capital investment (TI), which represents the capital investment spending by all industries directly involved in travel and tourism, is another of our interest variables and will also be divided by the total population (P). We choose the electric power consumption (EPC) as our control variable because the energy use of a country is highly correlated with its economic growth (e.g., Santiago et al., 2020); furthermore, energy can contribute to the three dimensions of development: social, economic and human (e.g., Malaquias et al., 2019). The Gross Domestic Product was also retrieved in constant 2010 US$, in order to calculate the real exchange rate (TX) through the ratio of Gross Domestic Product in constant local currency by the Gross Domestic Product in constant 2010 US$.

The transformation of the variables into per capita values is essential because it eliminates the dimensional distortions caused in the model's estimations by the variables in levels. GDP, EPC, TA, GDP_US, and P, were all retrieved from the World Bank, while TI was retrieved from the World Travel & Tourism Council.

We will use the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model in the form of an Unrestricted Error Correction Mechanism (UECM). This methodology gives the dynamic effects of the variables, allowing us to make a distinction between the Granger causality in short and the long-run. Moreover, it is robust to the presence of endogeneity, and when a determined coefficient is statistically significant, it is equivalent to the Granger causality testing (Menegaki et al., 2017; Jouini, 2015). Additionally, it deals with cointegration and supports the inclusion of variables with different orders of integration (I(0), I(1), and fractionally integrated variables) in the same estimation. The variables were transformed into natural logarithms ('L') and first differences ('D'). The ARDL model specification is the following:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{LGDPPC}_{it} = {} & \alpha_{1i} + \delta_{1i}\text{TREND} + \beta_{1i1}\text{LGDPPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \beta_{1i2}\text{LTAPC}_{it} + \beta_{1i3}\text{LTAPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \beta_{1i4}\text{LTIPC}_{it} + \beta_{1i5}\text{LTIPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \beta_{1i6}\text{LEPC}_{it} + \beta_{1i7}\text{LEPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \beta_{1i8}\text{TX}_{it} + \beta_{1i9}\text{TX}_{it-1} + \beta_{1it}. \qquad (1)\end{aligned}$$

To explain the dynamic relationships between our variables, we reparametrized equation (1) into the following specification:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{DLGDPPC}_{it} = {} & \alpha_i + \beta_{2i1}\text{DLTAPC}_{it} + \beta_{2i2}\text{DLTIPC}_{it} \\ & + \beta_{2i3}\text{DLEPC}_{it} + \beta_{2i4}\text{DLTX}_{it} \\ & + \gamma_{2i1}\text{LGDPPC}_{it-1} + \gamma_{2i2}\text{LTAPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \gamma_{2i3}\text{LTIPC}_{it-1} + \gamma_{2i4}\text{LEPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \gamma_{2i5}\text{TX}_{it-1} + \varepsilon_{2it}. \qquad (2)\end{aligned}$$

A series of diagnostic tests before the estimation are necessaries to validate that the choice of method was accurate. In addition, other tests and statistics need to be verified after model estimation to make sure that it meets mandatory econometric requirements in panel analysis (e.g., Dogru et al., 2019; Santiago et al., 2020; Marques et al., 2017; Fuinhas & Marques, 2012; Katircioglu, 2009). Every test and statistics of the method used will be presented.

In sequence, the characteristics of the series through

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Cross-Sectional Dependence

Variables	Descriptive statistics					Cross section dependence (CD)		
	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.	CD-test	Corr	Abs(corr)
LGDPPC	439	10.636	2.717	7.191	16.194	45.25***	0.664	0.781
LTAPC	440	−2.227	1.045	−4.554	−0.169	39.41***	0.581	0.620
LTIPC	440	−13.571	2.657	−18.376	−8.427	26.41***	0.390	0.524
LEPC	440	6.966	1.017	3.161	8.873	44.95***	0.661	0.805
LTX	439	2.184	2.546	−1.953	7.306	−0.29	0.661	0.805
DLGDPPC	417	0.021	0.035	−0.126	0.150	23.06***	0.348	0.378
DLTAPC	418	0.039	0.139	−0.812	1.258	10.71***	0.161	0.237
DLTIPC	418	0.054	0.236	−0.859	1.059	14.47***	0.219	0.313
DLEPC	418	0.029	0.075	−0.508	0.538	4.77***	0.072	0.213
DLTX	417	0.000	0.004	−0.038	0.051	−1.02	−0.016	0.213

Notes To achieve the results of descriptive statistics and to test the presence of cross-section dependence, the Stata commands *sum* and *xtcd,* respectively, were used. The CD test has $N(0,1)$ distribution under the H0: cross-section independence; *** denote statistical significance at 1% level.

the descriptive statistics as well as the results from the cross-section dependence test are presented. As can be observed, GDPPC has one less observation (data on GDP fails for Haiti in 1995), but that is not a problem, because STATA 15.0 can correct this issue and continues to assume the panel to be a strongly balanced one. It is also possible to observe one less observation on TX because the variable was calculated using the GDP, and it is not a concern due to the same explanation. As previously stated, in Table 2, the results from the cross-section dependence test can be observed, where it can be concluded that cross-section dependence is present in all variables, except in real exchange rate (TX).

Next, the correlation matrices and variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics are examined. The correlation matrix was used to check the degree of correlation that exists between the variables, while the VIF statistics was used to test for the presence of multicollinearity. The results of the correlation matrix only indicated the existence of a high level of correlation between LTIPC and LGDPPC, which is not a concern, given that the high correlation is with the dependent variable. A similar situation (high correlation between the LTX and LGDPPC) is detected; again, this does not cause a problem for the estimation due to the same reason. The lower VIF and mean VIF values prove that multicollinearity is not a problem for this paper's estimation. Details are in the Table 3.

Table 3 Correlation Matrices and VIF Statistics

	LGDPPC	LTAPC	LTIPC	LEPC	LTX
LGDPPC	1.000				
LTAPC	0.328	1.000			
LTIPC	0.753	0.069	1.000		
LEPC	0.364	0.449	0.409	1.000	
LTX	0.960	0.255	0.662	0.112	1.000
VIF*	n.a.	2.70	1.59	1.85	2.36
	DLGDPPC	DLTAPC	DLTIPC	DLEPC	DLTX
DLGDPPC	1.000				
DLTAPC	0.352	1.000			
DLTIPC	0.366	0.234	1.000		
DLEPC	0.290	0.092	0.117	1.000	
DLTX	0.191	−0.024	0.044	0.026	1.000
VIF**	n.a.	1.07	1.07	1.02	1.00

Notes * Mean VIF 2.12. ** Mean VIF 1.04.

Because cross-sectional dependence seems not to be present on the real exchange rate (TX), the 1st generation panel unit root tests will also be computed. Next, the results of the Maddala and Wu test are presented in

Table 4 Maddala and Wu Panel Unit Roots Test (MW)

Variable	WB (Zt-bar)	
	Without trend	With trend
LGDPPC	124.273***	103.006***
LTAPC	62.064*	54.967
LTIPC	63.009*	92.398***
LEPC	39.485	32.364
LTX	157.245***	103.039***
DLGDPPC	124.273***	103.006***
DLTAPC	135.209***	101.564***
DLTIPC	219.515***	159.999***
DLEPC	190.021***	203.790***
DLTX	434.253***	388.412***

Notes *, *** denote statistical significance at 10% and 1% level, respectively; Maddala and Wu (1999) Panel Unit Root Test (MW) assumes that cross-sectional independence, and H0: series is I(1); to compute this test, the Stata command *multipurt* was used.

Table 5 Panel Unit Root test (CIPS)

Variable	CIPS (Zt-bar)	
	Without trend	With trend
LGDPPC	−0.415	0.734
LTAPC	−2.368***	−0.810
LTIPC	−4.151***	−2.741***
LEPC	−0.185	3.613
LTX	−6.137***	−4.030***
DLGDPPC	−3.435***	−2.761***
DLTAPC	−3.293***	−2.233***
DLTIPC	−6.388***	−4.385***
DLEPC	−5.198***	−5.945***
DLTX	−10.958***	−8.922***

Notes *** denote statistical significance at 1% level; Pesaran (2007) Panel Unit Root Test (CIPS) assumes that cross-sectional dependence is in the form of a single unobserved common factor and H0: series is I(1); to compute this test, the Stata command *multipurt* was used.

Table 4. As the test of Maddala and Wu (1999) shows that there are variables presenting cross-sectional dependence, the veracity of the results is compromised for them. Thus, only the order of integration of the TX variable will be analysed. The result seems to indicate that the variable is I(0).

To see the order of integration of the remaining variables, the 2nd generation unit root tests, namely the augmented cross-sectional IPS (CIPS) test by (Pesaran, 2007) were computed. This test was used because the presence of cross-sectional dependence was registered in most of the variables, and the 1st generation panel unit root tests turned out to be inefficient in these cases. The results of the CIPS test show that some variables are I(1) and others are I(0), which is not a problem because the ARDL model supports these two levels of integration. These results confirm that the ARDL methodology is the best approach for the study (Table 5).

The Hausman test confronts random and fixed effects, and when the structure of the data is in the panel, it is necessary to test for the individual effects. In sequence, the results of the Hausman test are presented and, as we can be observed, the test rejects the null hypothesis. This result led us to conclude that the fixed effects model is the proper specification for our estimation: the countries' individual effects are significant. In this estimation, the sigmamore option was used, which is a recurrent option in previous studies (e.g., Özokcu & Özdemir, 2017) (Table 6).

Table 6 Hausman Test

Test	FE vs RE
Hausman test	$\chi^2(8) = 48.46^{***}$

Notes *** denotes significance at the 1% level; in both models, the Hausman test was performed with the *sigmamore* option. H0: random effects are the most appropriate.

After the Hausman test, with the results pointing to the use of the fixed effects model, the next step is the execution of a group of specification tests. The results of the pre-tests still reveal details of the nature of the variables, information useful for models' estimation.

Results and Discussion

To test for the presence of heteroscedasticity, we computed the modified Wald Test (null hypothesis: Homoscedasticity). The Pesaran test (null hypothesis:

Table 7 Specification Tests

Test	Statistics
Modified Wald test	354.940***
Pesaran's test	11.197***
Wooldridge test	59.396***

Notes H0 of Modified Wald test: $\sigma(i)^2 = \sigma^2$ for all i; Ho of Pesaran's test: residual are not correlated; H0 of Wooldridge test: no first-order autocorrelation; *** denotes statistical significance at 1% level.

residuals are not correlated and follow a normal distribution) to check for the presence of contemporaneous correlation was used. The Breush-Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test was also used to test if the variances across individuals are not correlated. In the present case, this test could not be applied because the number of countries in that sample is larger than the number of years in the study. Lastly, the Wooldridge test was used for autocorrelation to assess for the presence of serial correlation in our model.

The results from the previously mentioned tests are presented in Table 7, showing that heteroscedasticity, contemporaneous correlation, and first-order autocorrelation are all present in the model. All the statistics reject the null hypothesis of the respective specification tests.

Given these results, the Driscoll and Kraay (1998) estimator is the most appropriate estimator to use in estimations, because the standard errors produced by the estimator are robust to disturbances being cross-sectional dependent, heteroskedastic and autocorrelated up to some lag.

In this model, both the trend, the tourism capital investment per capita, and the real exchange rate (both TI and TX on the long-run) were statistically insignificant and were thus retrieved from the model. After these conclusions, equation (2) was replaced by equation (3), which represents this more parsimonious model.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{DLGDPPC}_{it} = {} & \alpha_i + \beta_{3i1}\text{DLTAPC}_{it} + \beta_{3i2}\text{DLTIPC}_{it} \\ & + \beta_{3i3}\text{DLEPC}_{it} + \beta_{3i4}\text{DLTX}_{it} \\ & + \gamma_{3i1}\text{LGDPPC}_{it-1} + \gamma_{3i2}\text{LTAPC}_{it-1} \\ & + \gamma_{3i3}\text{LEPC}_{it-1} + \varepsilon_{it}. \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Table 8 Estimation Results (Dependent Variable: DLGDPPC)

Variable	FE	FE-DK
Constant	0.722***	0.722***
DLTAPC	0.084***	0.084***
DLTIPC	0.035***	0.035***
DLEPC	0.099***	0.099***
DLTX	1.694***	1.694***
LGDPPC (–1)	–0.076***	–0.076***
LTAPC (–1)	0.036***	0.036***
LEPC (–1)	0.026***	0.026*
Diagnostic statistics		
N	417	417
R^2	0.373	0.373
F	$F(7, 388) = 33.04$***	$F(7, 18) = 27.91$***

Notes ***, * denote statistical significance at 1% and 10% level, respectively; to estimate the models, the Stata command *xtscc* was used.

Specification tests were remade for the parsimonious model, and the results were in line with the previous ones (presence of heteroscedasticity, autocorrelation. and contemporaneous correlation in the model). The results of the estimations are presented in detail in Table 8. The results show that, in the short-run, the tourism intensity, the tourism capital investment per capita, the electric energy consumption per capita, and the real exchange rate are all positive and statistically significant. Table 8 also shows a positive and statistically significant impact of both tourism intensity and electric power consumption on economic growth in the long-run. As we previously stated, the tourism capital investment and real exchange rate failed to show a statistically significant impact in the long-run and, for that reason, it was excluded from the estimation.

The long-run elasticities are not displayed in Table 8 because they had to be calculated through the ratio between the variable's coefficient and the LGDPPC coefficient, both lagged once, and this ratio was multiplied by –1. In Table 9, the impacts (short-run), elasticities (long-run), and the adjustment speed of the model (ECM) are shown.

Table 9 Elasticities and Speed of Adjustment (Dependent Variable: DLGDPPC)

Variable	FE	FE-DK
Short-run impacts		
DLTAPC	0.084***	0.084***
DLTIPC	0.035***	0.035***
DLEPC	0.099***	0.099***
DLTX	1.694***	1.694***
Long-run (computed) elasticities		
LTAPC	0.471***	0.471***
LEPC	0.345***	0.345***
Speed of adjustment		
ECM	−0.076***	−0.076***

Notes *** denote statistical significance at 1% level, the ECM denotes the coefficient of the variable LGDPPC lagged once.

Table 10 Estimation Results (Corrected for Shocks, Dependent Variable: DLGDPPC)

Variable	FE	FE-DK
Constant	0.732***	0.732***
DLTAPC	0.069***	0.069***
DLTIPC	0.034***	0.034***
DLEPC	0.092***	0.092***
DLTX	1.708***	1.708***
LGDPPC (−1)	−0.075***	−0.075***
LTAPC (−1)	0.028***	0.028***
LTIPC (−1)	0.004	0.004**
LEPC (−1)	0.029***	0.029**
ARG2002	−0.129***	−0.129***
ARG2009	−0.079***	−0.079***
CB2005	0.064***	0.064***
CB2006	0.071***	0.071***
RD2003	−0.062***	−0.062***
H2009	−0.052**	−0.052***
MEX1997	0.058**	0.058***
MEX2009	−0.079***	−0.079***
TT2003	0.067***	0.067***
TT2006	0.101***	0.101***
TT2009	−0.075***	−0.075***
UR2002	−0.084***	−0.084***
VEN2002	−0.087***	−0.087***
VEN2003	−0.068***	−0.068***
VEN2004	0.101***	0.101***
Diagnostic statistics		
N	417	417
R^2	0.586	0.586
F	$F(23, 372) = 22.90^{***}$	$F(23, 18) = 940114.75^{***}$

Notes *** and ** denote statistical significance at 1% or 5% level, respectively; to estimate the models, the Stata command *xtscc* was used.

From Table 9, it can be seen that the Latin America and Caribbean countries' economic growth was positively affected by the tourism arrivals per capita (tourism intensity) and by the electric power consumption per capita, both in the short and long runs, while the positive effects of tourism capital investment per capita and real exchange rate were only detected in the short run.

Latin America and Caribbean countries suffer from serious political, economic and social problems and therefore, once these problems had an impact on the economic growth of these countries, we considered the relevant shocks, which affected their economies between 1995 and 2014.

In 1997, the Mexican government adopted the National Program for Development Finance (NPFDF). In Uruguay, in 2002, a bank crisis occurred, due to the country's over-dependence on Argentina, which was also in depression. This depression was mainly due to currency devaluation. In the Dominican Republic, in 2003, a financial crisis was caused by bank failure.

In Venezuela, the oil strike in 2002–2003 followed in 2004 with an impressive rise in the oil prices. Trinidad and Tobago are very dependent on exports; in 2003m this country registered a massive increase in GDP, which could be associated with the Venezuelan instability in the same year, which led to a search for a new hydrocarbon exporting country, which benefitted Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2006, Trinidad and Tobago, due to a rise in the oil and gas prices and an increase in the foreign direct investment (FDI), expanded their energy sector.

Table 11 Impacts, Elasticities and Speed of Adjustment (Model Corrected for Shocks, Dependent Variable: DLGDPPC)

Variable	FE	FE-DK
Short-run impacts		
DLTAPC	0.069***	0.069***
DLTIPC	0.034***	0.034***
DLEPC	0.092***	0.092***
DLTX	1.708***	1.708***
Long-run (computed) elasticities		
LTAPC	0.368***	0.377***
LTIPC	0.047	0.057**
LEPC	0.418***	0.385***
Speed of adjustment		
ECM	−0.075***	−0.075***

Notes *** denote statistical significance at 1% level, the ECM denotes the coefficient of the variable LGDPPC lagged once.

In 2005, Cuba had a development of the tourism sector and was registered a reduction in the unemployment rate. In 2006, the highest economic growth in the history of Cuba happened as a result of Cuba's so-called energy revolution (e.g., Suárez et al., 2012). Other shocks that were considered were in Argentina, Haiti, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago (all in 2009) and that can be due to the financial crisis of 2008 followed by a global recession. Details in Table 10.

What was said previously about some economic problems in these countries indicates the existence of outliers in Argentina (2002), Cuba (2005, 2006), the Dominican Republic (2003), Mexico (1997), Trinidad and Tobago (2003, 2006), and Venezuela (2002, 2003, 2004). To control the detected outliers, dummies were added on the model to represent these events and correct them. Dummies ARG2002, ARG2009, RD2003, H2009, MEX2009, TT2009, UR2002, VEN2002, and VEN2003 represent a break, while CB2005, CB2006, MEX1997, TT2003, TT2006 and VEN2004 represents a peak. In Table 11, the impacts, elasticities and speed of adjustment of the model are shown.

From Table 11, it can be seen that the Latin America and Caribbean countries economic growth was positively affected by the tourism arrivals per capita (tourism intensity) and by the electric power consumption per capita, both in the short and long run. After the correction of the shocks, the tourism investment per capita has become statistically significant, not only on the short-run but also in the long-run. In addition, it had a positive impact on economic growth, becoming one of its main drivers. The real exchange rate has a significant and positive impact on economic growth but only in the short-run.

Regarding the ECM, from Table 11, it can be seen that its coefficient is negative and statistically significant, which indicates the presence of long-memory between the variables. This value represents the speed of adjustment of the model, i.e., the speed at which the dependent variable returns to equilibrium after changes in our independent variables. As can be observed, the speed of adjustment of the model is relatively slow.

The positive impacts of the electric power consumption per capita on the economic growth of these countries, both in the short and long-run, were expected, given that energy is seen as a driving force for growth (e.g., Hatemi-J & Irandoust, 2005). Additionally, it has high explanatory power in empirical growth models. Moreover, many authors consider energy variables crucial to explain countries' economic growth (e.g., Toman & Jemelkova, 2003). The real exchange rate, as previously stated, had a positive impact on the economic growth in the short run. The importance of the exchange rate to the policy and economic growth could benefit the countries that were in the early stages of economic development (Habib et al., 2017). Thus, because the countries used in this investigation are developing countries, this impact was expected. In the long run, with countries becoming more developed and prosperous, the real exchange rate could become irrelevant to growth (Aghion et al., 2009).

Given these results, the policymakers from Latin America and the Caribbean should be cautious in the adoption of energy conservation policies, since the economic output of these countries seems to be strongly linked with energy consumption, in the present case, with the electric power consumption per

capita. Measures that lead to a reduction in its consumption appear to be able to affect the economic growth of Latin America and Caribbean countries adversely.

Regarding the central question of the present study, it can be seen that both variables (tourism intensity and tourism capital investment) seem to have had a positive impact on growth, which confirms both of the hypotheses. The results of this study also corroborate those of other authors that studied the relationship between the tourism sector and economic growth for some countries from this region (e.g., Shahzad et al., 2017; Tang & Abosedra, 2014; Amaghionyeodiwe, 2012).

Given these results, we think that the countries from our sample should continue to attract as many tourists as possible at the same time, while the industries directly involved in travel and tourism should continue to increase the levels of their investments, given that both factors have a positive impact on economic growth. This is congruent with the findings of Du et al. (2016) that tourism's contribution to the long-run growth of an economy comes through its role as an integral part of a broader development strategy.

Conclusion

In order to answer to the central question of this study, the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model was used to assess the impacts, in both the short and long-run, of tourism on the economic growth of 22 Latin America and Caribbean countries. The specification tests showed that cross-sectional dependence, heteroscedasticity, contemporaneous correlation, and first-order autocorrelation were present in the model, which led to the Discroll Kraay estimator with fixed effects being used. The Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) is statistically significant and negative, which indicates the presence of cointegration/long-memory relationships between the variables in the study.

From the results, it is possible to observe that, in the short run, tourism intensity, capital investment, electric power consumption, and real exchange rate have a positive and significant impact on the economic growth of the Latin America and Caribbean countries, with the electric power consumption per capita being the main driver of the growth. In the long-run, all variables were shown to be significant and have a positive impact on growth. The tourism arrivals and electric power consumption have been revealed to be the principal drivers of economic growth in this region.

Therefore, the tourism intensity and capital investment, both on short and long-run, had a positive impact on the economic growth of the Latin America and Caribbean countries, which supports Hypotheses 1 and 2.

The main finding of this investigation is that once that tourism has a positive impact on the economic growth of this region, which means that an increase on the tourism intensity leads an increase on the economic growth, this region should increase the level of investment in this sector. The policymakers of the Latin America and Caribbean region should continue to develop measures aimed to attract as many tourists as possible while simultaneously promoting the investment in their travel and tourism industries. The country's economies have to invest more in human capital directly involved with the tourism sector and invest more in marketing to promote the region of Latin America and the Caribbean in addition to other economic sectors.

When a tourist chooses one destination, the majority of them (or all of them) do so considering the economic situation, the level of security, and the public health conditions of the region. Consequently, the policymakers should increase the level of the investments in healthcare (both to residents and tourists), which could happen through international partnerships with tourism agencies, for example, and should also increase the security in the region.

However, they also must pay attention to the other economic sectors so that their countries do not become extremely dependent on tourism activity. Excessive investment in the tourism sector, while neglecting the other sectors of the economy may lead these countries to a 'deindustrialisation' situation.

The use of energy consumption or electric power consumption directly related to tourism should be included in further research because it is a limitation of this investigation, as is the temporal horizon that ends in 2014. Another limitation of the study is analysing

the exchange rate behaviour with on linear analysis, which is different from what is commonly addressed in the literature, non-linear methods (e.g., Dogru et al., 2019; Irandoust, 2019).

We note that another gap in the tourism literature and economic growth that may be incorporated in future research: the inclusion of exogenous variables representing instability (e.g., political instability). Thus, allowing a more robust empirical approach to the current problems of the countries of the region (e.g., Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia) could guarantee greater veracity of the results (e.g., Arslanturk et al., 2011; Chen & Chiou-Wei, 2009).

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Original Scientific Article

Erasmus+ Mobility: Empirical Insights into Erasmus+ Tourists' Behaviour

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Erasmus+ students represent a large sub-segment of educational tourists, making this segment an attractive market for universities as well as destination marketing organisations. Unfortunately, very little is known about Erasmus+ students' travel behaviour; hence the present study aims at extending empirically supported knowledge about travel behaviour of students during their Erasmus+ mobility. Data was collected via an online survey among all Erasmus+ enrolling students in the academic year 2016/17 in Slovenia. The results show that 93% of the participants travelled during their mobility. The level of studies as well as gender affect students' travel behaviour, making the two characteristics immediately useful attributes when targeting Erasmus+ travellers. Based on perceived destination attributes, male students predominantly seek cities with attractive nightlife but female students look for easily accessible cities, which are safe and offer attractive cultural sites. These findings suggest that tourism providers, destination tourism organisations and universities should work hand in hand when designing personalised tourism experiences and their promotion among Erasmus+ students. This is crucial during the phase of planning Erasmus+ mobility, when students choose their destination and host university, as well as during students' Erasmus+ mobility, because Erasmus + students travel during their student mobility.

Keywords: Erasmus+ mobility, education, international students, destination attributes, tourist behaviour

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Introduction

Student mobility involves an increasingly large population of students. The volume of student mobility worldwide exploded from 2 million in 1999 to 5 million in 2016 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). In the OECD area alone, there were 3.5 million international or foreign students engaged in tertiary educational programmes in the year 2016. Different mobility programmes support students' mobility and aim at improving students' professional, cultural and language skills as well as students' international employability. International study

mobility has become a key differentiating experience for students, and has gained increased policy attention (OECD, 2017). Students engage in study mobility for various reasons, predominantly to improve their professional skills and for personal growth (Juvan & Lesjak, 2011). Nevertheless, recent research (for example, Lesjak et al., 2015) shows that factors specific to leisure travel play a highly important role in pursuing student mobility. Namely, being a tourist helps Erasmus mobility students to grow personally (for example, improve their understanding of a foreign culture or of nature, improve their ability to survive in a different environment, improve language skills, etc.).

The Erasmus+ mobility programme is a lot about travel. For example, Erasmus+ mobility students need to travel to a foreign country and, once in the host country, they explore the host as well as neighbouring countries (for example, Martinez-Roget et al., 2013; Gardiner et al., 2013; Pavlič & Koderman, 2014); they pursue the role of tourists. Given the volume of travel involved during Erasmus+ mobility it is inevitable that not only educational but also travel-related attributes of host countries play an important role in students' decisions to pursue mobility (Lesjak et al., 2015). The empirical evidence about the size of the Erasmus+ mobility programme and the fact that Erasmus+ students do travel while at the host destination, makes them an interesting travel market. However, little is known about the travel behaviour and drivers of Erasmus+ students' travel behaviour during their mobility.

There is no doubt that hospitality is focused on nurturing of guests, providing them the best possible experience while they are our guests (Gorenak, 2019). That is why understanding travel behaviour and its key drivers improves the ability of destination marketing organisations as well as educational host institutions to personalise tourist experiences and inform approaches, thus improving destination competitiveness. More specifically, destination organisations can increase the attractiveness of places and educational institutions. Additionally, they can inform tourism providers about the Erasmus+ student's characteristics that effectively differentiate various segments and segment specific travel decisions (for example, choice of accommodation). While many different factors affect tourist behaviour (Moutinho, 1993; Pearce, 2015), and thus differentiate tourist segments, the most interesting for the industry are the factors which are easily identified with the specific market segment (Dolničar, 2008); for example, among the student population these would be gender, age and the level of studies.

Investigating students' travel behaviour is not new, however, understanding leisure travel behaviour of Erasmus+ students is still relatively unexplored. Existing studies predominantly investigate travel behaviour of a general student population, typically involving long-term international students, which differentiate from Erasmus+ students. The key differentiating variable is that Erasmus+ students reside in a host country for up to 6 months and their high interest in leisure travel (Lesjak et al., 2015). Following this conceptualisation, Erasmus+ students represent longer-staying tourists, engaged in studying as well as leisure travel. As such, Erasmus+ students should represent an international travel market of high interest to universities and tourism organisations, because both strive to attract this educational international market segment.

The present study aims at extending our current understanding of Erasmus+ students' travel behaviour by investigating the most typical travel decisions and their association with most evident and easily identified characteristics of students (gender and level of studies). The theoretical contribution of this study lies in improving the theory of tourist behaviour in the context of a medium-term international student's travel. Practically, this study informs (1) educational institutions about key destinations attributes important for attracting Erasmus+ mobility students and (2) destination marketing organisations and tourism providers about how to personalise typical tourism services and infrastructure as well as how to communicate leisure travel opportunities to the Erasmus+ student travel segment.

The manuscript continues by explaining the specifics of the Erasmus+ student mobility and drivers of students' travel behaviour. We then proceed by explaining the methodology of the empirical research and data analysis. The manuscript concludes with the discussion and key recommendations on how tourism

industry and educational institutions can benefit by catering to the Erasmus+ student travel segment.

Drivers of Students' Mobility and Tourist Behaviour

Formal and informal learning are recognized as important behaviour drivers for young travellers, including students (UNWTO, 2008; 2016), who typically travel for more than 24 hours but less than one year, for the purpose of education. During such travels, students engage in different forms of tourism, for example volunteering, work and travel, cultural exchange, sports and adrenaline tourism; however, education remains their main motive (Moisa, 2010). More specifically, students can choose between various forms of educational tourism, such as study mobility exchanges, excursions, international research projects and international internships (van 't Klooster et al., 2008). Studying abroad has become an important personal investment as it brings an important competitive advantage once students enter the labour market (Moreira & Gomes, 2019). Additionally, international students represent an important source of income for host destinations with everyday living expenses contributing to the local economy (OECD, 2017; Amaro et al., 2019).

Different reasons drive students' decisions for study mobility; the prevailing ones are improving employment opportunities, access to higher quality of education, learning about culture, improving foreign language skills and ensuring higher economic or social status in the future (Abubakar et al., 2014; Moreira & Gomez, 2019). Several authors (for example, Ajanovic et al., 2016; Sova, 2017; Stone & Petrick 2013; Vossensteyn et al., 2010) conceptualise students' mobility motives as personal and professional skills development, career opportunities, leisure, relaxation and other drivers. Juvan and Lesjak (2011) report that Slovenian student outgoing mobility is driven by a desire to gain international experience, a change of everyday environment, interesting study programmes offered by the host universities, improvement of language skills, recommendations from friends, and by the Erasmus grant. In general, international Erasmus travel is driven by the desire to experience something new, personal growth, to have fun and relax, visiting new places, learning about different cultures, meeting new people, spending a semester abroad, improving foreign language skills, experience a different education system, improve academic knowledge and increase job opportunities (Lesjak et al., 2015; Heung & Leong, 2006; Kim, 2007).

Students consider a number of university and destination related attributes when making their mobility choices, for example welcoming attitudes of the local population, tuition fees and scholarships, security and quality of life in the host country, political instability in the home country, access to visas and proximity to the homeland (Juvan & Lesjak, 2011; Abubakar et al., 2014). When choosing their mobility destination, students also look at the non-academic attributes of their host country. More specifically those perceived destination attributes are connected to rich natural attractions, safety and security, novelty, rich culture and history, a large number of different events, a high standard of living, nightlife, accessibility and others (Lesjak et al., 2015; Buffa, 2015). During their study, mobility students travel within and outside their host country and typically consider fun, costs and safety attributes of the tourism products and services (Vukić et al., 2015; Pavlič & Koderman, 2014) as the key drivers of choices. North American and European students typically stay in cheaper forms of accommodation, while Chinese and Indian students opt more for traditional accommodations, such as hotels or motels (Michael et al., 2004).

Tourist behaviour typically involves tourists' choices of destination, accommodation infrastructure, and destination activities as well as booking tools. Besides that, tourists seek tourism services that make them feel at ease and relaxed (Gorenak et al., 2019). These choices greatly depend on the travel budget. Students, and in particular Erasmus+ students, pursue their tourist travel through the Erasmus+ exchange mobility system which supports students in evaluating tourist-related alternatives (one example of such support is the Erasmus+ grant, which financially supports students' travel-related choices). Students are a heterogeneous travel market, yet with some common characteristics (Richards & Wilson, 2003). Prior stud-

ies (Table 1) provide a wide range of, yet inconclusive, knowledge about how to attract and cater to the international Erasmus+ students travel market.

Based on the existing literature, it can be concluded that a number of easily identifiable characteristics of student travellers affect students' travel behaviour. More specifically, age (Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Michael et al., 2004; Payne, 2009; Shoham et al., 2004; Varasteh et al., 2015), gender (Shoham et al., 2004; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003) and the level of study degree (Glover, 2011; Shoham et al., 2004; Payne, 2009; Varasteh et al., 2015). These characteristics typically drive the choices of accommodation (Michael et al., 2004; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Shoham et al., 2004) or influence travel motives and students' expenditure during the mobility (Payne, 2009; Varasteh et al., 2015). Marital status, nationality and sources of income affect travel preferences of international postgraduate students in Malaysia (Varasteh et al., 2015).

Student Mobility: Erasmus+ Programme

Student mobility is a form of educational mobility aimed at supporting enriching formal education by travelling to a foreign country and university. It enables students to grow professionally and personally, but also provides them with opportunities for leisure travel and escape from everyday life (Lesjak et al., 2015). Erasmus+ is a successor of the Erasmus programme (founded in 1987) for the period 2014–2020, which promotes education, training and sports in all sectors of a lifelong learning programme (European Commission, 2017). It was developed to provide easy access to a quality educational and multicultural experience for knowledge seekers and to modernise education, training and sport for youth across the Europe. It (1) offers a unique global educational experience catered to students seeking atypical ways of completing their formal education, at various levels of degree, (2) aims at increasing a sense of global citizenship in each participant, and (3) provides students with the opportunity to experience novel educational approaches for studying an already-chosen professional discipline. The Erasmus+ programme's aim is also to help develop a highly-skilled labour force, improving students' capabilities and skills and enhancing the European status of a knowledge-based economy (Gonzalez et al., 2011). Since its foundation, the Erasmus programme has supported educational travel for over 9 million individuals, of which over 5 million were students (European Commission, 2017).

In Slovenia, Erasmus+ and other student mobility programmes are managed by CMEPIUS (Center RS for Mobility and European Education and Training Programs) and MOVIT, the two national agencies responsible for the implementation of the program in the period 2014. Table 2 demonstrates numbers of incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students in Slovenia in the last decade. From the table it can be seen that the number of incoming students has more than doubled, while the number of outgoing students has risen by 30% from 2007 to 2017.

Methodology

The present study investigates tourist behaviour (destination choice, accommodation choice, travel expenditure, transport choices, booking behaviour and perceived importance of destinations' attributes) of Erasmus+ students in Slovenia. A web survey was sent to all Erasmus+ enrolling students in the 2016/17 academic year, both to incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students. The survey questionnaire was developed to measure tourist behaviour of Erasmus+ tourists. The survey questionnaire was developed in the English language and administered via the online survey tool 1ka. Prior to finalizing the instrument, questions and items were reviewed and discussed by a pilot group of 40 Erasmus+ students in order to justify and validate the items and to amend the wording so as to ensure the reliability and understanding of the queries and answer options for the Erasmus+ students' different levels of English language skills. As a result of this process, some unreliable statements were rephrased or excluded from the final version of the questionnaire. Questions used closed type binary and single or multi category answer options. The total population involved approximately 2500 Erasmus+ students from three major Slovenian universities (University of Ljubljana (UNI LJU), University of Maribor (UNI MB) and University of Primorska (UP)). The final sample

Table 1 A Brief Bibliographic Study about Students' Tourism Behaviour and Its Drivers

Reference	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Gardiner et al. (2013)	QUAL, QUAN	International students studying in Australia (*N* = 4366)	Australia	Hostel (44%) Holiday APP (23%) Hotels & Motels (23%) Camps (5%)	–	AU$ 500	–
Varasteh et al. (2014)	QUAN	Malaysian students (*N* = 409)	Malaysia	–	–	–	Touring Attending events Sports Recreation Resting
Lantai & Mei, X. Y. (2017)	QUAL	Mainland Chinese international students (*N* = 15)	Norway	Homestays Airbnb Hostels	–	–	–
Michael et al. (2004)	QUAN	International students studying in Melbourne (*N* = 219)	Australia	–	–	A$ 392	Sightseeing (natural, manmade attractions) Shopping
Monteiro & Pereira (2016)	QUAL	Erasmus students (*N* = 880)	Portugal	Youth hostel (44%) Hotel (27.5%) Housing with families (23.4%)	–	–	–
Glover (2011)	QUAL	Domestic & International stud. (*N* = 948)	Australia	Friends & Relatives (26.9%) Backpacking (27.9%)	–	–	
Payne (2009)	QUAN	International students on holidays (*N* = 217)	New Zealand	Backpacking & Hostel (28.8%) Family & Friends (20.8%)	–	NZ$ 397.81–688.77	Eating out (60.6%) Beaches (57.5%) Shopping (40.9%)
Shoham et al. (2004)	QUAN	Students (*N* = 558)	USA, South Africa & Israel	Hotels Friends/family B&B Camps Hotels	–	–	Entertainment Sport Culture Nature
Weaver (2003)	QUAN	International students (Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, and Singapore) (*N* = 139)	Within Australia	Motel (35%) Hotel (34%) Private home (29%) Hostel (20%) B&B, guesthouse (9%) Camping (6%).	Package tours	–	Sightseeing Recreation Socialising
Xu et al. (2009)	QUAN	Students from the UK (*N* = 239) and China (*N* = 286)	UK & China	Hostels Self-catering	–	–	Outdoor Sightseeing Shopping Entertainment

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) methodology, (2) respondents, (3) destination, (4) accommodation, (5) booking tool, (6) expenditure, (7) activities.

Table 2 Number of Incoming and Outgoing Erasmus+ Students 2007–2017, for Slovenia

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Incoming	825	987	1138	1287	1516	1681	1677	1872	2257	2346	2097	17683
Outgoing	1018	1132	1118	1199	1411	1316	1277	1433	1421	1306	1311	13942

Notes Based on data from CMEPIUS (http://statistike.cmepius.si).

included 546 valid responses. In December 2017, researchers contacted the three Erasmus+ coordinators at the Slovenian universities with the request to send a survey invitation via email with the link to all their incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students in academic year 2016/2017.

Building on existing youth travel, and specifically students' travel-related literature, the survey measured typical tourist choices of Erasmus+ students. More specifically, students were asked if they took any trip during their mobility (dichotomous variable; Yes, No), where they took the trip (nominal variable; domestic, international or domestic and international destination), where they typically stayed during their trip (nominal variable; hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, holiday apartment/holiday house/holiday cabin, private room, camping site, youth hostel/backpacker, holiday home owned by my family, other), how they typically booked their accommodation (nominal variable; couch surfing, AirBnB, online travel agent, walk-in travel agent, friends and relatives, directly with the provider, other), how much they spent on average per trip (ordinal variable; up to 310 €, between 311 and 620 €, more than 621 €), how they typically travelled to their destination (nominal variable; by air, by sea, by coach/bus, by car, by train, by motorbike, by bike) and how they typically booked their transportation (nominal variable; online travel agent, walk-in travel agent, other). Students were asked about the importance of destination attributes (interval variable; 1 meaning the attribute is not important at all, 5 meaning the motive is very important) in their choice of a travel destination. The following research hypotheses were built:

HYPOTHESIS 1 *The gender and the type of study degree influence the tourist behaviour of the interviewed ERASMUS+ students.*

HYPOTHESIS 2 *The gender and the type of study degree influence the importance of the destination attributes for the interviewed ERASMUS+ students.*

Frequency distributions were used to analyse Erasmus+ students' tourist behaviour. Chi square tests were used to infer relationships between tourist behaviour and socio-demographic characteristics (gender and type of degree) of students. Kramer's V test was used to indicate the strength of the association between the variables (Field, 2013). Given the use of the chi-square test, only responses with $N = 30$ (the assumption of at least 5 units in each cell is needed in order for the test to be valid, thus, having at least 6 cells in each analysis, 30 units is the minimum assumption) or above on a single response option were included in statistical analysis to limit the effect of sample size (McHugh, 2013). A *t*-test was employed to infer differences between destination attributes and socio-demographic variables.

Results

72% of the interviewed students were female, the rest were male students. 47.8% of participating students were undergraduate, while 52.2% of them were postgraduate (master or doctoral) students. More than half (51.6%) of the surveyed students were incoming and 48.4% were outgoing students. The participating students' average age was just short of 24 years. When testing the associations between the gender and the degree of study (using the chi-square test) no statistical differences at the 0.05 level were found ($\chi^2 = 0.119$, $p = 0.730$). Table 3 demonstrates that Erasmus+ mobility students actively engage in travelling during their student mobility.

Students' Travel Behaviour and Its Drivers

The following section demonstrates the existing statistically significant differences between students' tourist

Table 3 Erasmus+ Students Travel Behaviour

Question	Answer	*f*	*f%*
Do Erasmus+ students make leisure related travel?	Yes	407	92.9
	No	31	7.1
Where Erasmus+ students travel?	Only within Erasmus+ country	92	22.8
	Only outside Erasmus+ country	1	0.2
	Both, within and outside Erasmus+ country	311	77.0
Where Erasmus+ students stay?	Hotel, motel, bed & breakfast	59	15.6
	Holiday apartment/holiday house/holiday cabin, private room/Airbnb	82	21.6
	Camping site	9	2.4
	Youth hostel/backpacker	206	54.4
	Holiday home owned by my family or friends/couch surfing	23	6.1
How Erasmus+ students book their accommodation?	Couch surfing	29	7.9
	Airbnb	139	38.0
	Online travel agent	164	44.8
	Friends and relatives	34	9.3
How much Erasmus+ students spend per trip?	Up to 310 €	129	33.9
	Between 311 € and 620 €	154	40.4
	621 € and above	98	25.7
How Erasmus+ students travel to the trip destination?	By air (e.g. airplane, helicopter, etc.)	80	19.9
	By sea (e.g. ship, boat, etc.)	3	0.7
	By coach/bus	130	32.3
	By car	131	32.6
	By train	55	13.7
	By bike	3	0.7
How Erasmus+ student book their transportation for trips?	Online travel agents/sites	317	80.1
	Walk-in travel agents	31	7.8
	Other	48	12.1

behaviour and their demographics. Table 4 demonstrates significant association between gender, type of degree and typical students' travel-related behaviour (detailed outputs are available in Tables 5 and 6).

A significantly higher number of the interviewed male students reported staying in hotels and similar establishments (26.7%) as well as in private types of dwellings (e.g. apartments, holiday houses; 26.7%) compared to the interviewed female students (13.8% of the interviewed female students reported staying in hotels, motels or bed and breakfast; 22.3% of them stayed in private accommodation). On the other hand, a significantly higher number of the interviewed female students reported staying in dwellings typical for young travellers (e.g. youth hostels; 64%) compared to the interviewed male Erasmus+ students (46.7%). As a means of transportation to the destination, a significantly higher proportion of the interviewed male students reported using cars (42.4%) compared to the interviewed female students (28.6%), while the higher proportion of the interviewed female students reported using coaches or buses (36.8%) compared

Table 4 Students' Tourist Behaviour by Gender and Type of Study Degree

Behaviour/choices	Gender			Degree of study		
	χ^2	p	Cramer V	χ^2	p	Cramer V
Accommodation	0.596	0.440	0.039	3.006	0.222	0.093
Destination	10.251	0.006	0.174	0.754	0.385	0.043
Booking the accommodation	0.916	0.633	0.053	2.463	0.292	0.085
Expenditure	3.746	0.176	0.096	10.347	0.006	0.165
Transportation	9.846	0.020	0.161	8.280	0.041	0.145
Booking the transportation	1.203	0.548	0.056	1.983	0.371	0.071

Table 5 Students' Tourist Behaviour by Gender

Item	Behaviour/choices	Percentage		Test		
		Male	Female	χ^2	p	Cramer V
Destination	Domestic	19.6	23.3	0.596	0.440	0.039
	Domestic and international	80.4	76.7			
Accommodation	Hotel, motel, bed & breakfast	26.7	13.8	10.251	0.006	0.174
	Holiday apartment*	26.7	22.3			
	Youth hostel/backpacker	46.7	64.0			
Booking the accommodation	AirBnB	39.3	41.8	0.916	0.633	0.053
	Online travel agent	48.3	49.4			
	Friends and relatives	12.4	8.9			
Expenditure	Up to 310	26.5	36.8	3.746	0.176	0.096
	From 310 to 610	43.9	38.9			
	610 and above	29.6	24.3			
Transportation	By air	21.2	20.4	9.846	0.020	0.161
	By coach/bus	21.2	36.8			
	By car	42.4	28.6			
	By train	15.2	14.3			
Booking the transportation	Online travel agent	83.2	80.3	1.203	0.548	0.056
	Walk-in travel agent	7.9	6.8			
	Other	8.9	12.9			

Notes * Or holiday house, holiday cabin, private room or AirBnB.

to the interviewed male students (21.2%). No statistically significant associations exist between gender and other investigated forms of travel behaviour (e.g. destination choice, booking the accommodation, type of transportation and expenditure).

The type of study degree appears to be significantly associated only with the trip expenditure of Erasmus+ students and the choice of transportation to the destination. A significantly higher proportion of the interviewed undergraduate students, compared to the interviewed postgraduate students, reported spending 610 EUR or more. 70% of the interviewed under-

Table 6 Students' Tourist Behaviour by the Type of Study Degree

Item	Behaviour/choices	Percentage		Test		
		(1)	(2)	χ^2	p	Cramer V
Destination	Domestic	21.0	24.6	0.754	0.385	0.043
	Domestic and international	79.0	75.4			
Accommodaton	Hotel, motel, bed & breakfast	15.3	18.8	3.006	0.222	0.093
	Holiday apartment*	20.9	26.5			
	Youth hostel/backpacker	63.8	54.7			
Booking the accommodation	Airbnb	43.5	38.9	2.463	0.292	0.085
	Online travel agent	48.8	48.5			
	Friends and relatives	7.6	12.6			
Expenditure	Up to 310	29.8	37.8	10.347	0.006	0.165
	From 310 to 610	37.2	43.5			
	610 and above	33.0	18.7			
Transportation	By air	23.9	16.6	8.280	0.041	0.145
	By coach/bus	27.9	37.7			
	By car	36.5	29.6			
	By train	11.7	16.1			
Booking the transportation	Online travel agent	79.2	80.9	1.983	0.371	0.071
	Walk-in travel agent	9.6	6.0			
	Other	11.2	13.1			

Notes * Or holiday house, holiday cabin, private room or AirBnB; (1) undergraduate, (2) postgraduate.

graduate students spent more than 310 EUR per trip, while just 10% less interviewed postgraduate students reported similar expenditure per trip.

Statistically significant differences exist between the level of studies and the choice of transportation to the destination. More specifically, a significantly higher proportion of the interviewed undergraduate students reported using air transportation and cars to reach their travel destination. In contrast, a significantly higher proportion of the interviewed postgraduate students reported using coaches or buses and trains.

Empirical evidence shows no significant associations between the type of degree and other measured forms of the Erasmus+ students' tourist behaviour.

Results partially support Hypothesis 1. The gender of the interviewed students statistically significant influences only the choice of the destination and the type of the transportation at the destination, while the degree of study statistically significant influences the total expenditure at the destination and the type of transportation at the destination.

Destination Attributes and its Drivers

The following section reports the association of perceived importance of destination attributes with the gender and the type of the degree (see Tables 8 and 9 for detailed outputs). The most important destination attributes overall (Table 7) are the natural (M = 4.18) and cultural (M = 4.14) attractions and sites. Other important attributes for choosing the destination are safety and security (M = 3.84), cheap to visit (M = 3.76), easily accessible (M = 3.68) and cheap to live in (M = 3.57). Attributes less important to the students are the destination's popularity (M = 2.57), high living standard (M = 2.61) and familiar lifestyle (M =

Table 7 Perceived Destination Attributes by Gender and Type of Study Degree

Item	Gender		Degree of study	
	t	sig.	*t*	sig.
Destination is very popular	1.135	0.257	1.471	0.142
Destination offers cultural attractions and sites	−2.596	0.010	−0.117	0.907
Destination offers events	0.407	0.684	1.245	0.214
Destination is cheap to visit	0.809	0.419	0.469	0.639
Destination is yet to be discovered by tourists	−0.010	0.992	1.316	0.189
Destination is easy accessible	−2.200	0.029	0.449	0.653
Destination is safe and secure	−1.995	0.048	0.209	0.834
Destination offers interesting night life	2.112	0.035	3.778	0.001
At destination they speak language which I know	0.359	0.720	−1.025	0.306
Destination is sustainably oriented	−0.837	0.403	1.827	0.068
Destination has high living standard	1.407	0.160	−0.071	0.943
Destination is cheap to live in	0.627	0.531	1.790	0.074
Destination offers a lifestyle which I am familiar with	0.670	0.478	−1.992	0.047

2.68). In almost all cases of the variable destination attributes the skewness and kurtosis statistics show a distribution similar to the normal one (in the interval ±). Responses on the importance of 'destination offers natural attractions and sites' suggest distribution that is not close to a normal one (kurtosis = 2.319); hence we decided to omit this attribute from further statistical analysis.

Four of the measured 13 destination attributes are significantly different by gender. More specifically, the interviewed female students placed significantly higher importance on cultural attractions (M = 4.21, p = 0.01), ease of access (M = 3.74, p = 0.02), and safety and security (M = 3.90, p = 0.04) than the interviewed male students. However, the interviewed male students placed significantly higher importance on interesting nightlife (M = 3.18, p = 0.03) than the interviewed female students. The gender of the interviewed students does not significantly affect other measured destination attributes.

Only two destination attributes appear to be significantly different by the type of the study degree. The interviewed bachelor Erasmus+ students placed significantly higher importance on destinations' interesting nightlife (M = 3.22, p = 0.001) but the interviewed masters and PhD students placed significantly higher importance on familiar lifestyle (M = 2.77, P = 0.047). No other significant differences exist between the type of degree and the perceived importance of the destination's attributes.

Hypothesis 2 claims that the gender and the degree of study of the interviewed students influence the perceived importance of destination attributes. Results just partially support the stated hypothesis. The gender of the interviewed students statistically significant influences some of the above-mentioned perceived importance of destination attributes, such as the fact that the destination offers cultural attractions and sites, that the destination is easy accessible, that it is safe and secure and that it offers an interesting nightlife. The degree of study of the interviewed students statistically significant influences the perceived importance of destination attribute that the destination offers an interesting nightlife and that the destination offers a lifestyle they are familiar with.

Discussion

Erasmus+ students generate an important share of the international tourist market, and studying abroad appears among the top travel motives of the younger

Table 8 Associations between Destinations Attributes and Gender

Item	Gender	N	Mean	t	sig.
Destination is very popular	Male	116	2.64	1.135	0.257
	Female	301	2.52		
Destination offers cultural attractions and sites	Male	116	4.01	−2.596	0.010
	Female	303	4.21		
Destination offers events	Male	116	3.37	0.407	0.684
	Female	302	3.33		
Destination is cheap to visit	Male	115	3.83	0.809	0.419
	Female	302	3.75		
Destination is yet to be discovered by tourists	Male	116	3.18	−0.010	0.992
	Female	302	3.18		
Destination is easy accessible	Male	117	3.51	−2.200	0.029
	Female	302	3.74		
Destination is safe and secure	Male	116	3.68	−1.995	0.048
	Female	300	3.90		
Destination offers interesting night life	Male	115	3.18	2.112	0.035
	Female	302	2.94		
At destination they speak language which I know	Male	116	2.93	0.359	0.720
	Female	303	2.88		
Destination is sustainably oriented	Male	115	3.10	−0.837	0.403
	Female	302	3.19		
Destination has high living standard	Male	116	2.72	1.407	0.160
	Female	302	2.57		
Destination is cheap to live in	Male	116	3.59	0.627	0.531
	Female	302	3.53		
Destination offers a lifestyle which I am familiar with	Male	116	2.73	0.670	0.478
	Female	302	2.65		

generation. Youth travel (both study and educational travel) is becoming a stable ongoing industry, contributing over 20% of international travel flow, which is equal to 207 million arrivals and $194 billion expenditure in the year 2012 (see http://www.student-market.com/youth-travel). The number of international trips of young people based on the UNWTO forecast might increase to almost 370 million by 2020 for a total expenditure of over 400 billion dollars (Global Report on The Power of Youth Travel, 2016). Consequently, it is deemed relevant to investigate Erasmus+ students' tourist behaviour and infer factors significantly associated with typical tourist behaviour.

The present study empirically supports that Erasmus+ students are an active and large travelling segment, with over 90% of respondents reporting travelling during their mobility. The travel industry sector sells most of its products and services via the internet (Abou-Shouk et al., 2013) and millennials are the first generation born to be living continuously with various technology options every day. Therefore, they could be described as e-travellers who are

Table 9 Associations between Destinations Attributes and Type of Study Degree

Item	Level of degree	N	Mean	t	sig.
Destination is very popular	(1)	221	2.64	1.471	0.142
	(2)	234	2.50		
Destination offers cultural attractions and sites	(1)	221	4.14	−0.117	0.907
	(2)	236	4.14		
Destination offers events	(1)	222	3.41	1.245	0.214
	(2)	235	3.30		
Destination is cheap to visit	(1)	220	3.78	0.469	0.639
	(2)	235	3.74		
Destination is yet to be discovered by tourists	(1)	221	3.25	1.316	0.189
	(2)	235	3.13		
Destination is easy accessible	(1)	222	3.70	0.449	0.653
	(2)	235	3.66		
Destination is safe and secure	(1)	221	3.85	0.209	0.834
	(2)	233	3.83		
Destination offers interesting night life	(1)	220	3.22	3.778	0.001
	(2)	235	2.84		
At destination they speak language which I know	(1)	222	2.86	−1.025	0.306
	(2)	236	2.98		
Destination is sustainably oriented	(1)	222	3.25	1.827	0.068
	(2)	234	3.09		
Destination has high living standard	(1)	221	2.60	−0.071	0.943
	(2)	235	2.61		
Destination is cheap to live in	(1)	222	3.65	1.790	0.074
	(2)	235	3.49		
Destination offers a lifestyle which I am familiar with	(1)	221	2.58	−1.992	0.047
	(2)	235	2.77		

Notes (1) Bachelor degree, (2) Master/PhD/doctoral degree.

constantly connected to the internet via their gadgets (smart phones, tablets, etc.) either searching for travel information or booking holidays (Huang & Petrick, 2010). Travelling Erasmus+ students are extensive users of e-tourism infrastructure, both to inform and purchase travel services. About 40% of respondents book their accommodation through an online travel agency and 36.8% of respondents book accommodation using the Airbnb P2P platform. Erasmus+ students' travel choices significantly depend on gender and type of the degree, making these attributes the most suitable for identifying and targeting Erasmus travellers with personalised tourism offerings. More specifically, the choices of accommodation depend solely on gender, but transportation choices depend on the gender and the type of degree. In addition, the type of the degree demonstrates significant association with the student's destination-based travel expenditure. More specifically, the interviewed female Erasmus+ students are more likely to stay in

youth hostels, backpackers, family homes and with friends and relatives. However, the interviewed male Erasmus+ students prefer traditional commercial accommodation dwellings such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfast, and private rooms. These findings suggest that universities as well as destinations' marketing organisations should work together in developing and promoting gender-customized accommodation infrastructure and their promotion as well as distribution channels. For example, they could promote and provide typical tourism accommodation to male students, but low-budget types of dwellings for female students.

Moreover, undergraduate students appear to be more lucrative to the tourism industry than their graduate counterparts are; the latter segment has significantly fewer students spending over 610 Eur. Every Erasmus+ student receives a living allowance for their stay in a foreign country; however, it may be that undergraduate students receive higher financial support from their parents as they predominantly depend on them (Souto-Otero, 2008). The Erasmus+ allowance and their parents' financial support improve undergraduate disposable income, which students can use for tourism purposes. In addition, graduate students predominantly seek fulfilment of professional rather than personal goals, and thus have lower desire for leisure travel (Brooks & Waters, 2009), which may result in lower spending for vacations. The findings about expenditure usefully contribute to existing knowledge about students' travel expenditure and more specifically, our findings suggest that Erasmus+ students may be better spenders than other types of international students (for example, Payne, 2009; Gardiner et al., 2013).

Destination attributes play an important role in leisure travel, as they represent characteristics of tourist places that tourists find most important when making travel-related decisions; yet, tourist segments differ in the perceived importance of destination attributes (Um & Crompton, 1992; Meng & Uysal, 2008). Understanding what Erasmus+ travellers find important at the destination and how this importance depends on students' personal characteristics allows destination marketing organisations as well as universities to develop and communicate relevant destination attributes. Overall, Erasmus+ travellers find cultural and natural attractions as well as safety to be the most important attributes of their chosen destinations. These attributes are followed by costs of visiting and living; thus rounding up the most typical attributes important to the mainstream travel market (Um & Crompton, 1992). Familiar lifestyle, living standard and familiar langue seem to have less importance when evaluating destination alternatives.

The perceived importance for some of the attributes changes between gender and the type of degree; hence suggesting different approaches when targeting students of different gender and type of degree. More specifically, having cultural attractions and sites makes a destination significantly more attractive to female, than to male students. Compared to male students, female students place significantly higher importance on destination transport accessibility and to the level of safety and security. In contrast, male students rate interesting nightlife opportunities significantly higher than female students. Looking at gender, a typical female Erasmus+ student prefers a destination that is easily accessible, is safe and has attractive cultural sites and attractions. A typical male Erasmus+ student predominantly seeks destinations with attractive nightlife opportunities.

Two research hypotheses were tested in this paper. The first one states that the gender and the degree of study of the interviewed students influences the students' travel behaviour. Results just partially support the above-mentioned research hypotheses. More interviewed male students reported staying in hotels and similar establishments (26.7%) as well as in private types of dwellings (e.g. apartments, holiday houses; 26.7%), while a higher number of the interviewed female students reported staying in dwellings typical for young travellers (e.g. youth hostels; 64%). A higher proportion of the interviewed male students reported using cars (42.4%), while a higher proportion of the interviewed female students reported using coaches or buses (36.8%). A higher proportion of the interviewed undergraduate students, compared to the interviewed postgraduate students, reported spending 610 EUR or more. 70% of the interviewed under-

graduate students spent more than 310 EUR per trip, while just 10% less interviewed postgraduate students reported similar expenditure per trip. A higher proportion of the interviewed undergraduate students reported using air transportation and cars to reach their travel destination, while a higher proportion of the interviewed postgraduate students reported using coaches or buses and trains. Hypothesis 2 claims that the gender and the degree of study of the interviewed students influences their perception of the destination attributes. The research hypothesis can be just partially supported by the results. The interviewed female students placed significantly higher importance on cultural attractions (M = 4.21, p = 0.01), ease of access (M = 3.74, p = 0.02), safety and security (M = 3.90, p = 0.04) than the interviewed male students. However, the interviewed male students placed significantly higher importance on interesting nightlife (M = 3.18, p = 0.03) than the interviewed female students. The interviewed bachelor Erasmus+ students placed significantly higher importance on destinations' interesting nightlife (M = 3.22, p = 0.001) but the interviewed masters and PhD students placed significantly higher importance on familiar lifestyle (M = 2.77, p = 0.047).

Conclusions

Educational tourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of tourism and has become a multimillion-dollar industry (Payne, 2009); however, the tourism professionals and destination organisation marketers too often overlook it. Erasmus+ travellers, especially students, engage in tourism while on their mobility and they need personalised infrastructure and resources for successful engagement in tourism. This requires that the tourism industry collaborates with various educational institutions to understand students' needs, their capabilities and tourism-related behaviour. Thus, universities are an important player for destination-based tourism, because they provide the tourism demand. Even more, it appears that knowledge provision is no longer the most important competitive product of universities (Juvan & Lesjak, 2011) and that universities must collaborate with providers of other attributes within their places (for example, cultural attractions or interesting nightlife). This calls for increased collaboration between universities, as knowledge providers, and destination marketing organisations, as tourist opportunity providers.

Two key conclusions derive from the present research. First, the Erasmus+ travel market is growing and is distinct from the mainstream travel market and second, at least gender and level of degree make the Erasmus+ travel market heterogenic. The first conclusion points to the need for the travel industry and universities to collaborate in marketing destinations and universities. The second conclusion suggests a personalised destination marketing mix when catering to travel planning and destination-based behaviour of Erasmus+ students. In addition, the study offers an important insight for the future research on Erasmus+ students. While educational aspects of Erasmus+ students' mobility are well covered in scientific literature, a lack of empirical evidence about Erasmus+ students' travel behaviour exists. The present study extends our empirically-derived knowledge on Erasmus+ students' typical tourism behaviour and characteristics of the Erasmus+ travel market that warrant distinctive tourism development and promotion approaches when catering to Erasmus+ travellers.

The key limitation of the study lies in the geographic dimension of the study sample. Conclusions that could be more generalisable would require a geographically more diverse and representative sample of Erasmus+ students. Thus, we recommend expanding the research to all countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme. Further, we advocate more research focused on the leisure travel aspects of Erasmus+ mobility, not only direct travel by the Erasmus+ mobility students, but also the travel behaviour of individuals socialising with Erasmus+ mobility students.

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Original Scientific Article

Human Resources in Industrial Tourism

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Industrial tourism, as a specific type of tourism, emerged over a century ago but was not studied widely until recently. However, most of the current research is focused either on heritage industrial tourism or on several aspects, such as visitor characteristics, relation to the local economy, and similar. This paper attempts to highlight the human resources aspect of industrial tourism in different organisations. Our primary research methods were observation with participation (joining factory tours) and semi-structured interviews with company representatives. We define various existing categories of industrial tourism human resources models of organisations that carry out industrial tourism, the necessary competences for the workplace, and the methods of educating industrial tourism employees. Based on the gathered results, we propose some guidelines for companies to follow in forming their products of industrial tourism.

Keywords: HR, competence, education, industrial tourism, HR model

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Introduction

Human resources are the basis of an organisation's activities, since the organisation does not exist without them. One of the most critical aspects of HR management is the concern for the development of employee knowledge, that is, the implementation of education and training. With this, the organisation ensures continuous development and progress and maintains and strengthens its value on the market (Armstrong, 2012; Bratton & Gold, 2012). Education and training take place in various forms and are adjusted to the position of an employee within the organisation, to his/her previous knowledge and abilities. Here we encounter another essential aspect of HR management. Employees must have the appropriate competences to perform the work efficiently and effectively (Svetlik, 2005). The task of the supervisor is to recognise the capabilities of employees and, firstly, to place them in a specific position, and then to ensure that these competences are further upgraded in the process of education or training.

In this research, we focused on the study of the necessary competences and the practice of developing the knowledge of employees in companies that carry out industrial tourism. Industrial tourism, as a particular tourist product, is distinct from the production process itself and, as such, does not provide added value in the creation of a factory's primary product. However, with a thoughtful strategy, the product of industrial tourism can become a powerful marketing tool and, at a very developed stage, it can be a new product of an organisation that can be marketed independently. Employees involved in the implementation of industrial tourism become the first representative of the organisation, before visitors and potential buyers of the company's primary product. Therefore, they must be

properly selected, have the appropriate competences, and take care of the development of their knowledge.

The purpose of the research was to present a human resources model for industrial tourism. To achieve this purpose, several research objectives were developed. First, we wanted to define the types of employees that carry out industrial tourism. We were interested in whether there are any differences between the companies engaged in industrial tourism. The second objective was to identify competences that are necessary for the implementation of industrial tourism. The third objective was to outline the modes of the education of industrial tourism employees.' In the research, we examined how Slovenian companies carry out industrial tourism and how they take care of the personnel involved in this product.

Literature Review

Industrial Tourism

The concept of industrial tourism can be defined as a type of tourism that includes visits to operating companies and industrial heritage sites. Visitors can taste edible products, view production processes, try out interactive applications, and experience historical insights into the company (Otgaar et al., 2010; Rodríguez-Zulaica, 2017). According to Ifko (2010) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2014), industrial tourism can be considered to be a viewing of industrial heritage or operating processes, although it is not necessarily considered as a type of tourism but as a marketing activity (Chow et al., 2016; Otgaar, 2012). There is evidence that tourists have been visiting companies for over a hundred years (Frew, 2000; Page & Connell, 2014). For example, in France, they visited vineyards and chocolate factories, in the United States whiskey distilleries, and elsewhere in the world anything from tobacco factories to mines and stock exchanges. In this regard, industrial tourism is perceived as a tourist attraction; such attractions (Edelheim, 2015) are a strong motivator for travel and can be divided into several groups, including cultural attractions, natural sights, events, recreation and entertainment; they can also be categorised as being natural or manmade (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003; Holloway & Humphreys, 2016). Industrial tourism can be placed in the category of cultural sites and is a form of cultural tourism (Yamashita, 2014). Cultural tourism places particular emphasis on education and entertainment components (Frank Orel & Medarić, 2018) and industrial tourism offers precisely that: education about industry and entertainment while observing production processes or participating in interactive displays.

As a form of cultural tourism, industrial tourism is an important factor in European countries, especially for those with long industrial traditions, such as Great Britain, Spain or Germany. However, more and more central and east European countries are recognising the benefits of industrial tourism, since they also built their economy on different industries and are nowadays still strongly dependent on them. For example, the Czech Republic and its town Ostrava are building their tourism on industrial tourism (Kajzar & Václavínková, 2016). However, other countries with rich industrial heritage still lack further industrial tourism development; for example, Hungary only has heritage industrial tourism (Boros et al., 2013), and Croatia has some initiatives about power plant and mining visits (Gržinić et al., 2009). Industrial tourism and its offer of factory tours and visits to industrial heritage sites is also present in Slovenia. However, the local scientific research is primarily focused on industrial heritage (e.g., mines) (Ifko, 2010).

Meanwhile, industrial tourism can be an appropriate alternative to the existing tourism services, since in Slovenia and abroad there are many operating plants, well-organised companies with innovative business processes, and interesting service activities that tourists would visit. Thus, industrial tourism becomes a critical socio-economic phenomenon for which interest is growing. As stated by Xie (2006) and MacCannell (2013), one of the reasons for the popularity of industrial tourism is that society is in the deindustrialisation phase in which we are beginning to forget the traditional methods of production and are more involved in the service industry. By viewing traditional production processes, we nostalgically look upon our technical heritage and regain forgotten knowledge.

Since industrial tourism is a relatively less explored field of tourism, education in this area is particularly

important. Organisations need to provide suitable and qualified personnel for implementing industrial tourism. Training at work and continuous improvements are particularly important for maintaining the competitiveness of the organisation (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Rakowska, 2014; Bratton & Gold, 2012). There are several essential points in performing industrial tourism that relate to the skills and knowledge of employees. First, as stated by Otgaar et al. (2010), there are numerous contact points of employees with visitors. The company must provide an appropriate and qualified guide that will lead the group around the company and present the operation of the organisation (Marsh, 2008). Furthermore, the company must also arrange the contact points of visitors with employees within the regular working process. In doing so, viewing should not interfere with the work process, and employees should not feel pressured by the visitors (Otgaar, 2010). There are also positive effects of such tourist visits, since employees are much more motivated, productive, and proud of their work in the presence of the public.

Human Resources and the Tourism Sector

Employees are one of the basic pillars of the organisation, since the success and the survival of it depends on their performance. This is particularly so in the tourism sector, which is a service activity and is based on the interaction of employees with tourists (Madera et al., 2017). Employees are defined as human resources or people who in any form participate in an organised form of human work and, therefore, work in an economic, political, sports, or similar organisation (Florjančič et al., 2004). They are also presented as work force that can be regarded as macro-meso-micro conceptualisations of the tourism workforce phenomena (Baum et al., 2016). Employees are the most essential element of each organisation, and they are involved in the process of achieving a group or individual goals (Bratton & Gold, 2012).

Thus, employees represent the human capital of the organisation deriving from their knowledge and experience, education, professional competence, psychometric features, personality characters and abilities, entrepreneurial enthusiasm, innovation and creativity, satisfaction, ability to adapt to changes, and similar (Moustaghfir, 2014; Armstrong, 2012). Human capital creates the value of an organisation and, therefore, it is necessary to manage it strategically. Moreover, recent studies emphasise that sustainable human resource management (Baum et al., 2016; Baum, 2019; Robinson et al., 2019) will replace strategic human resource management. Thus, a higher level of quality and practices that are responsible toward the environment, local society, culture, and economy should be also introduced in human resources management. This includes justice and equality, transparent HR practices, profitability, and employee well-being (Wikhamn, 2019).

Mihalič (2006) summarises Ulrich, stating that human capital management represents overall education and training of employees, developing their skills for them to contribute to the goals and needs of the company in which they work, and create added value. Similarly, Nickson (2013) states that successful human resources management leads to the organisation's success via appropriate recruiting, introducing new employees to their work, education and training, rewarding, and motivating employees. Human resources development takes place through the education and training processes, which represent the acquisition of new skills through various training programmes, courses and workshops (Heery & Noon, 2008; Wilton, 2016). This is particularly important in the tourism sector, in which employees have constant contact with customers and are continuously under the tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2012) of their customers. In the case of industrial tourism, employees in production organisations also become visible. The most visible to visitors are the factory tour guides, which are representatives of the organisation. They must represent organisational values (Gorenak, 2019) and the organisation itself at its best with their knowledge, behaviour, and attitude. However, this requires proper education and training.

Education and Training of Tourism Personnel

The process of permanent education within the organisation can be defined as a network of events and activities for the development of the person's distinct abilities (Florjančič et al., 2004). We can also use the

term 'training' for a systematic and planned preparation of the learning process, acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the goals of the organisation (Boštjančič, 2011). Nickson (2013) defines training as activities with a focus on immediately improving employee performance by developing certain skills, acquiring knowledge and competences. Nickson (2013) also states that organisations in the tourism and transport sectors allocate the most resources for education and training to improve customer service and at the same time follow strict legal regulations on safety, health and nutrition standards. Another reason is the high rate of employee turnover, which requires the organisations to continuously educate new and inexperienced staff.

According to Mihalič (2006) and Bratton and Gold (2012), the goal of education and training is to increase the competency of employees for the work they do, and consequently increase their efficiency and effectiveness at work. In doing so, employees effectively develop their ability to adapt quickly and respond to changes that have occurred and to learn for the contemporary and future increasingly turbulent environment of modern organisations (Wojtczuk-Turek & Turek, 2015). This promotes innovation, productivity, and employee satisfaction, their affiliation to the organisation, personal career development, the promotion of individuals and the organisation as a whole. All of this is also essential in the tourism sector, which requires educated, well-trained, intelligent, energetic employees with entrepreneurship skills and knowledge of several foreign languages in order to provide high-quality customer service, and hence efficiency and profitability of the tourist services (Gupta, 2011).

The acquisition of knowledge can be divided into external (implemented outside the organisation) and internal (implemented within the organisation) (Mihalič, 2006), but we can also define formal and informal acquisition of knowledge. Formal education and training of workers usually takes place outside the workplace (Florjančič & Vukovič, 1999), is preplanned and structured. Informal acquisition of knowledge takes place in the form of information exchange, mutual assistance and joint problem solving (Frazis et al. in Rozman & Kovač, 2012). Methods and forms of acquiring knowledge are highly diverse: lectures, discussions, demonstrations, conferences, case studies, teamwork, role-playing (simulation), computer-assisted learning (CAI), simulations, manager games, e-learning, video lectures, courses, seminars, workshops, symposiums, meetings, and consultations (Florjančič et al., 2004; Mihalič, 2006). However, organisations are currently increasingly less inclined to use classical education methods. Modern forms of knowledge acquisition, such as e-learning, coaching, mentoring, simulation learning, job shadowing, rotational education, independent learning and other similar forms of new employee training methods are increasingly in use (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2013). Research shows that advanced foreign organisations use only ten per cent of classical forms of acquiring knowledge to educate their employees (Mihalič, 2006). As Bhattacharya and Cohen (2017) write, English-language literature indicates the characteristics of a worker that can be acquired through learning with the abbreviation KSA: knowledge – skills – abilities/attitudes. Likewise, we can label all of these characteristics as an employee's competence. We follow the definition of competences as a pool of knowledge, abilities, skills, experiences and values of the individual collected during education and career (Gorenak, 2013).

Competences

Competences have been studied and defined by several authors. The beginnings of the use of this term date back to the early 1970s, when David McClelland introduced the concept to improve the process of selecting personnel (Thanopoulos et al., 2011; Brophy & Kiely, 2002; Gelhard, 2017). McClelland has identified competences as knowledge, skills, traits, attitudes, self-concepts, values or motives directly related to job performance or critical life outcomes and shown to differentiate between superior and average performers (Thanopoulos et al., 2011). Svetlik (2005) proposes a definition according to which competences are defined as the ability of the individual to activate, use, and connect the acquired knowledge in complex, diverse, and unpredictable situations. Rozman and Kovač (2012), Jauhari (2006), Kohont (2005) and others also cite similar definitions.

The literature presents several approaches to the concept of competences. Competences are considered to be an individual's capacity, as an organisation's ability, and as a tool for better communication between the education system and the labour market (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2011; Fominiene et al., 2015). In human resources, competences are used primarily to describe employees and estimate their ability to perform professional duties in different situations; according to employee competence, we can distinguish between average and above average employees; organisations can better achieve their strategic goals when recruiting employees with appropriate competences (Judrups et al., 2015).

To recognise the capabilities of employees more efficiently, competence models were designed. Swiderski (1987 in Thanopoulos et al., 2011) proposed three basic clusters: hard, soft, and conceptual competences. The first one includes technical and administrative skills; soft competences are also known as interpersonal skills, which include sensitivity, adaptability, creativity and flexibility; conceptual competences can be defined as critical thinking, problem-solving, judgment and decision-making.

In contrast, Spencer and Spencer (in Thanopoulos et al., 2011) distinguished two categories of competences. The first are threshold competences (like writing skills) that every employee must have; they are not exceptional behaviour. The second are differentiating competences (like decision-making ability) that show the difference between an average and extremely successful individuals.

Mihalič (2006) divided the basic competences into three sets. The first set are personal and behavioural competences (decision-making ability, strategic thinking, ethics, the ability of analytical and creative thinking and expression). The second set is the competence to work with people (the ability of interpersonal communication, public speaking, delegating, conflict management, negotiation, teamwork). The third section covers competences for working with information (project management ability, knowledge of business processes, sense of space, accuracy and promptness).

Regarding competences, one of the most important factors is that the organisation determines the basic competences that are crucial for all employees and the additional competences that employees need in certain positions or departments of the organisation (Moustaghfir, 2014; Stevens, 2012; Westeren, 2017). In the tourism sector, high-quality staff is of key importance, as tourism is a service activity that largely depends on the capable and hospitable employees (Gupta, 2011; Nickson, 2013). Gorenak and Gorenak (2012) analysed the competences needed by tour guides while performing a guided tour. There are different requirements among the European countries, since some emphasise theoretical knowledge of history and geography while others emphasise communication skills, managerial skills, foreign language knowledge, planning and problem-solving skills. As the basic competence of tourist guides, they cite excellence in tour-guiding techniques and communication competences. Fominiene et al. (2015) also confirm that the developed personality characteristics and interpersonal communication are the most important competences in the tourism sector.

Therefore, soft skills (hospitality, kindness, compassion) are far more important than hard or technical skills (knowledge of information technology), and this is reflected in the tourism industry. Employers state that their employees must not only know their professional field and theoretical content perfectly, but also have to respect themselves and others, be independent, responsible for their activities and end-results, be innovative, adaptable, be team-players, be able to communicate, participate, think critically and constantly set new goals.

Baum (2015) suggests that changes in the world contribute to shifts in the workforce skills demands while employers move their focus from technical skills to soft skills, for example. social media management knowledge, a wider portfolio of language, cultural and green skills. Moreover, employees must have a broad skillset; thus, they can perform a flexible range of tasks. Therefore, to enhance this skill set, training is vital.

The Aims and Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

As we wrote in the literature review, employees are a key element of the organisation's performance. This is

particularly true in the tourism sector, which is a service activity and, as such, is even more dependent on the employees themselves: on their knowledge, skills, character, characteristics and also on their current well-being. Several research studies have already addressed various groups of tourism professionals, such as managers and tourist guides. However, we were interested in the state of industrial tourism employees. Industrial tourism is a relatively less explored area of tourism; at the same time, it is a mix of tourist services and factory production processes. Regarding this feature, we wanted to explore who is performing industrial tourism (or who is guiding factory tours), what competences are required for this work, and how they gain necessary knowledge. Considering that there is not a large number of organisations in Slovenia that allow visitors to view their production processes, we decided to focus the study on individual cases of production factory tours. We have designed the following research questions:

- RQ1 *Who performs industrial tourism in organisations (organisation employees or is industrial tourism arranged by outsourcing another organisation)?*
- RQ2 *What are the responsibilities of industrial tourism employees (is this their basic job or do they have other tasks)?*
- RQ3 *Which competences and what knowledge should the industrial tourism employees have?*
- RQ4 *How is the organisation concerned with knowledge management of industrial tourism employees (do they arrange training)?*

Methods Used

After reviewing the existing literature in the fields of human resources and industrial tourism, observation with participation in the process of viewing the production process itself was used as a method of research. We decided to visit four Slovenian companies that offer factory tours, since industrial tourism in Slovenia is in the emerging stage and thus provides different case studies to examine. Our research sample was composed of four companies that advertise this product on their web sites and are among large companies in the country. The tours were held on 24 April 2018 at the location of Revoz (Renault automobile production), Novo mesto; on 21 May 2018 at the location of Pivovarna Laško Union (Union Brewery), Ljubljana; on 26 May 2018 at the location of Pivovarna Laško Union (Laško Brewery), Laško; and on 1 June 2018 at the location of the company Droga Kolinska, Food Industry (production of Argeta pâté), Izola. We told companies that we would take part in the factory tour, but to ensure greater credibility of the tour performance, we always joined a group that was already on the schedule. This was not possible at Revoz, because the company was in the confidentiality phase, and visits were not possible, except in specific circumstances. However, the tour of Revoz took place just as if a random group of visitors had attended it. During and after the end of the visits, we made notes about the delivery of the tour and double-checked the information at the end with the tour guide.

As a method of data acquisition, we also used a semi-structured interview with representatives of the departments responsible for industrial tourism planning (see list of informants in Table 1). At Revoz, we interviewed a representative of the Communication and Public Affairs Department; at Pivovarna Laško Union, we interviewed the head of the Corporate Events Department and the Union Experience (this person is responsible for industrial tourism in both visited breweries); at Droga Kolinska, the questions were answered by the head of production and by the marketing department. The basic questions were sent to the companies' representatives first via e-mail; they also answered additional questions after the factory tour was conducted. If factory tours were performed by another person and not by the company's industrial tourism representative, we also asked tour guides some of the same questions and obtained their answers.

Findings

We have found that each company has a different personnel policy in the implementation of industrial tourism. Thus, we can identify four types of industrial tourism human resources from our studied cases:

1. Staff, employed for the sole purpose of implementing industrial tourism.

Table 1 List of Study Informants

Respondent	Company	Department in the Company	Work tasks in industrial tourism
Respondent A	Revoz	Communication and Public Affairs Department	Strategic planning, reservations, visitor communication, tour guiding, presenting.
Respondent B	Pivovarna Union	Corporate Events Department and the Union Experience	Strategic planning, recruiting tour guides.
Respondent C	Pivovarna Laško	Corporate Events Department	Strategic planning, communication with outsourcing organisation.
Respondent D	Droga Kolinska	Marketing department; Production	Strategic planning, scheduling production workers for guiding tours.

2. Staff, employed in Communications, PR, Marketing, and similar departments.
3. Staff, employed in the production process.
4. Staff from outsourcing organisations.

The workplace of the first type of industrial tourism employees is the post of industrial tourism operator. This means that people are employed as hosts who take care of regular factory tours, visitor programmes, and presentation of the company. In the case of Pivovarna Laško Union, this type of employees can be found at the Union Brewery in Ljubljana. Their hosts are students or people on working contracts. Nevertheless, these employees have no influence on the content of the factory tour or on the strategic decisions regarding industrial tourism. The decision-makers in this process are the management of the corporate relations department and the company's management itself. The workplace of the second type of industrial tourism employees is in the department for communication, public relations, marketing and similar. Such an example can be found at the automotive company Revoz in Novo Mesto, where the representative of the Communications and Public Affairs Department conducts factory visits, represents the company and is in contact with visitors. The reasons that this is under their department are given by Respondent A:

> We used to have a network of tour guides who were experts from the production departments. But it turned out that visitors were not interested in technical details as in an interesting and fun presentation itself. So, we made the decision to hand over tour guiding to the communication department. Why? As a department, we are constantly near information, factory innovations, and we have excellent communication skills.

Their work also includes planning and strategic insight into the implementation of industrial tourism and, as such, are also responsible for the future development of this kind of service. Nevertheless, the company's management confirms the final strategic decisions.

As a third type of industrial tourism employees, a person who is employed in production can carry out industrial tourism. An example is the production of Argeta pâté plant in Izola, Droga Kolinska Company. There, the visitors are welcomed by a person, employed as a technologist in production, which is, in fact, the position of the company's production process. Respondent D explained the process of selecting tour guides.

> Factory tours are guided by those employees, who know the production process and speak the language of the visitors. Usually, this is done by the head of production, but we also make daily agreements who gets to guide which tour, since this is related to our ongoing activities that we perform besides factory tour guiding.

This person pauses his/her professional obligations

at the time of carrying out the factory tour, takes over the group, takes it through the production premises, and presents the company and the production process. In doing so, he/she can use his/her expertise, which he/she uses in everyday work. However, this person does not participate in the strategic planning of the development of industrial tourism. For this, the heads of production and marketing department are responsible.

The last type is cooperation with external organisations who carry out factory tours. This form of outsourcing can be found in the company Pivovarna Laško Union, more precisely in the brewery in Laško. There, employees of the public institution 'Centre for Sport, Tourism, Information and Culture Laško' (Center za šport, turizem, informiranje in kulturo Laško – STIK) carry out the factory tours. Their tasks include contacting and guiding visitor groups, presenting the company and its production processes. They are in contact with the company Pivovarna Laško Union, but do not influence the strategic decisions regarding the implementation of industrial tourism. The decision-makers in this process are the management of the corporate relations department and the company's management itself. After the interviews, we could see companies' need for different employees' competences. Thus, in the Union brewery, where we detected the first type of industrial tourism human resources, they highlight competences, such as the expert knowledge of the factory history and the process of brewing beer. In addition, the guides need to have good communication skills and a good sense for people. For visitor groups, requiring specific knowledge of production processes, production employees, who can provide more detailed information on professional issues, are recruited as tour guides.

> Most of the groups are guided by our presenters; these are students or contract workers. When hosting specific groups (Biotechnical Faculty, Mechanical Engineering Faculty, Biotechnical educational centre, . . .) I ask for help from other production employees, like engineer officers, energetics expert, microbiologists or food science experts. [Respondent B]

It is also desirable for a factory tour guide to be inventive and adjustable to the group needs in order to choose an appropriate way of guiding. For example, it is possible to select only an oral representation of the factory or visitors can participate in a treasure hunt where information is thus conveyed in a fun manner. In doing so, the guide must have the skills to perform the playful treasure hunt. The knowledge of foreign languages (Slovene, English, Croatian) is also important.

The second type of industrial tourism human resources, carried out by Revoz, highlights the importance of knowing the production process, the knowledge and use of ICT (PowerPoint, video, headphones), the time availability of the guide and his/hers tour guiding experience. Since the guide is responsible for the whole process from booking to guiding, he/she must also master communication skills, know how to make a system announcement, check the operation of ICT and security equipment, know the procedures for arranging a possible catering offer for certain visitors, and personally engage in the performance of the tour itself. Furthermore, since the guide is also responsible for the development of industrial tourism, it is expected that he/she also has the skills of strategic planning, is creative, and takes initiative. As the most important element, they point out that a person who carries out factory tours must have good communication skills, as well as sense for people in order to judge what a particular group is more or less interested in, so that the guide can adjust explanations accordingly (e.g., students compared to business partners).

Moreover, he/she has to know the production process, be aware of the innovations in production, and be widely educated. If there is a group that requires more specific knowledge of the company, one of the production employees also joins the tour and gives more detailed information. The factory set up this system after production employees first performed the tours, but it turned out that visitors were not interested in many technical details. They much more prefer an interesting and attractive interpretation of a tour guide with excellent communication skills.

In the case of industrial tourism in the production of Argeta pâté, where we detected the third type of

industrial tourism human resources; important competences are knowledge of the production process, safety and sanitary rules, knowledge of the visitor's language and time availability of the guide with regard to his/hers other duties.

The fourth type of industrial tourism human resources was found in the Laško brewery. The guides must have guiding expertise and especially good communication skills, according to Respondent C:

> Groups that STIK brings to the Laško Brewery are guided by their tour guides, who are trained for the job. In addition to expert knowledge about the production process, they have to have foremost a good sense for communication with people.

For groups requiring specific information about the production processes, they invite additional production employees (e.g., technicians) to provide more detailed information on professional issues. Since the factory is located near a health resort and a spa, hosting tourists from different countries, knowledge of foreign languages, such as Italian, English, Spanish, German, and Serbian, is also essential. They also point out the flexibility of the guide to the situation and to the group needs, as well as the guide's administrative skills needed to carry out visits booking and collect entry fees.

Companies also take care of the knowledge development of their industrial tourism employees. In the Union brewery, training is carried out at the annual level or, if necessary, each time there is something new in the production process. The new guides are introduced to industrial tourism in such a way that they firstly attend a factory tour as visitors, when someone else guides a tour. Further, it is recommended to use 'job shadowing' and monitor experienced employees at the workplace. Then they receive a text with the information data that they have to learn for their presentation. Prior to their first officially executed tour, they conduct an internal factory tour for their co-workers to check their knowledge and skills. In addition, guides also conduct HACCP training and practice their skills of how to pour a beer correctly. Guides hold regular meetings on current affairs, occasionally attend various training courses, such as psychological lectures on people skills, training on gamification, branding, and similar.

Revoz does not organise special training for guides. Before new guides begin with the factory tours, they can study a guidebook with the main information about the company and the factory tour process. They used to have regular meetings with tour guides, but since guiding has been taken over by the communication department, there are no more such meetings, as there are not many people involved in the process.

> We don't have trainings for factory tour guides. In the past, we used to have regular meetings with tour guides, when there was still a network of tour guides. But since communication department took that over, that is gone. [Respondent A]

For guides who are conducting the tour of Argeta pâté production, the company does not carry out training or has no introduction lessons. There are only regular short coordination meetings about the division of groups among different guides and other special arrangements. In contrast, the Laško brewery provides annual training sessions for their tour guides and especially when there is something new in the production process. Furthermore, the guides coming from STIK must take part in the training for local tourist guides; before they start conducting factory tours, they study literature about the brewery, so they can learn as much about the factory and the production process as they can.

Discussion

Companies use different types of industrial tourism human resources, which is mainly dependent on the availability of personnel and the degree of importance that industrial tourism has for the company itself. Regarding staff availability, the most basic type of industrial tourism human resources could be identified as employees working only for the purpose of implementing factory tours, as the staff is most easily accessible.

The importance of industrial tourism is reflected in the significance of this offer for the company. The product is most important in companies for which the supply of industrial tourism is considered as a self-contained product, and is not just a marketing tool but can become a self-standing tourist attraction of the destination. Thus, in the Union brewery, they offer a unique experience product, 'Union Experience,' for which they employ staff solely for implementing industrial tourism. Since the product is regularly accessible to visitors, there is also a need for a greater number of employees. In addition, the product is designed and adjusted to different groups of visitors; thus, employees should consider this characteristic while preparing for a factory tour. This type of human resources seems to be most appropriate, since employees best know their work tasks; they specialise in group tours and develop all the necessary competences for conducting industrial tourism. However, in the case of this company, tour guides do not participate in the strategic planning of industrial tourism: they are only service providers. Here, the company should consider how to incorporate guides into strategic planning, since they know both the situation in the production areas and the characteristics, needs, and wishes of the visitors with whom they are talking during the tours.

For the other three types of industrial tourism human resources, employees' time is much less available, since their basic tasks are in other areas, or they are not employed at the factory and thus are not permanently present. The importance of industrial tourism is reflected in the strategic plans for industrial tourism and employee involvement in these decisions. This was the highest in the case of Revoz, where the tour guide also develops the product of industrial tourism itself, as the company wants to develop a factory tour as a self-contained product in the future.

As we have found in the study, the competences of industrial tourism employees are critical. Among them, the most outstanding is the knowledge of the production process itself that all companies require from their tour guides. Communication skills, foreign language skills, and flexibility were also common responses, which means that companies expect their employees to master soft and hard skills (according to Swiderski, 1987 in Thanopoulos et al., 2011) or competences for working with people and for working with information (according to Mihalič, 2006). In one company (Revoz), the employee is also responsible for the development of industrial tourism, so that personality and behavioural competences are also expected (according to Mihalič, 2006), which shows that the employee is capable of decision-making, strategic thinking, analytical and creative thinking. According to these findings, companies that offer industrial tourism can search for potential employees who already have communication skills, speak foreign languages, and are willing to learn about the company itself and the production process. Since we suggest that guides are also involved in the strategic development of the product, potential employees may also have characteristics of creativity, planning skills, and the like.

While the desired competences of employees in all companies are similar, the situation is different when examining the field of knowledge development among companies. Basic training is mainly placed at the beginning of the work when an employee is introduced to industrial tourism. At that, either companies time carry out internal training or employees read the guidebooks on industrial tourism in the company. Later, only one company responded that employees also organise additional training in the areas of people skills, brand knowledge, gamification, and others. Two companies also prepare training for the introduction of new features production, which potentially influence the course and content of the factory tours.

It can be noted that companies that see industrial tourism as a stand-alone product are investing more in the development of the knowledge of industrial tourism employees. Thus, the Union's Union Experience is currently a stand-alone product: a tour of the Union brewery, for which guides are systematically educated about the production process and guiding skills while the company simultaneously takes care of the development of their soft competences. This could be followed by other companies that plan to introduce a self-contained tourist product. At the beginning, they would prepare the introduction courses for the new guides, prepare a guidebook with basic information, and instruct and train the employees in the field of soft

skills, since they all stated that the ability to communicate is the most important. Hence, soft skills should be more emphasised in employee training. All of these findings are summarised in the model of industrial tourism personnel, which is presented in Figure 1.

As shown in the model, we start with proposed three sets of competences that employees in industrial tourism need. These include the necessary competences for working with people, for working with information, and for personal and managerial competences. According to the obtained data in the literature and the study, we propose three types of workplaces that deal with industrial tourism. They are an independent department for industrial tourism, industrial tourism as part of the marketing and PR department, and the participation of an outsourcing organisation.

The independent industrial tourism department consists of the head of the department and factory tour guides. The head is responsible for the development of the industrial tourism product, but he/she should also include guides in strategic decisions, although they have a more operational role to play. This form is used when the product of industrial tourism is already well developed.

In the second form, a factory tour guide is also a person who is responsible for the development of the product; that person is a member of another department, presumably marketing or public relations department. This form of industrial tourism workplace is used when the product of industrial tourism is in the development phase.

The third form of industrial tourism organisation is the outsourcing to an external organisation that provides guides for the factory tours and other assignments. Meanwhile, a person who takes care of the development of the industrial tourism product is a member of another department (presumably marketing or public relations). This form of industrial tourism organisation is used when the product is in the development stage, and there is a simultaneous lack of available company staff to conduct tours.

In all three cases, we propose a system of training for all personnel involved in industrial tourism. First, training should be prepared prior to the beginning of work, where more emphasis is placed on professional knowledge about the factory and about guiding techniques. Then, during the implementation of factory tours, a number of additional training sessions should be prepared annually, which focus on soft competences. Based on this model, the organisation can select the most suitable employees for the implementation of industrial tourism, place them to the appropriate workplace, and continuously care for the development of their knowledge.

Conclusion and Implications

In this study, we focused on industrial tourism and industrial tourism human resources. Regarding the situation in the four studied cases at the companies (Revoz, Pivovarna Laško Union (Union and Laško Brewery) and Droga Kolinska), we can summarise our findings and answer our research questions. In response to the first two research questions, four types of industrial tourism human resources can be identified: staff employed only for the purposes of industrial tourism; staff employed in the communication, PR, or another department; staff employed in core production process; staff outsourced from an external organisation. The first three types are represented by employees working in the parent organisation, while the latter type includes employees who primarily work outside the parent organisation. Employees duties include visitor guiding and presentation of the factory, while the other type of employees (employees coming from the communication or PR department) also strategically plan the product development. In other cases, strategic planning is a part of management tasks.

Further on, we were interested in which knowledge and competences industrial tourism employees should possess. Here we have found that the critical competences are, first of all, professional knowledge of the production process. Communication skills, foreign language skills, and flexibility were also common responses; hence, soft skills are also very important in industrial tourism as in other tourism workplaces (Fominiene et al., 2015; Baum, 2015). Such competences are required primarily with factory tour guides that are in direct contact with visitors. The guides embody the company and, therefore, they need to know accurate and interesting factory technical information and use

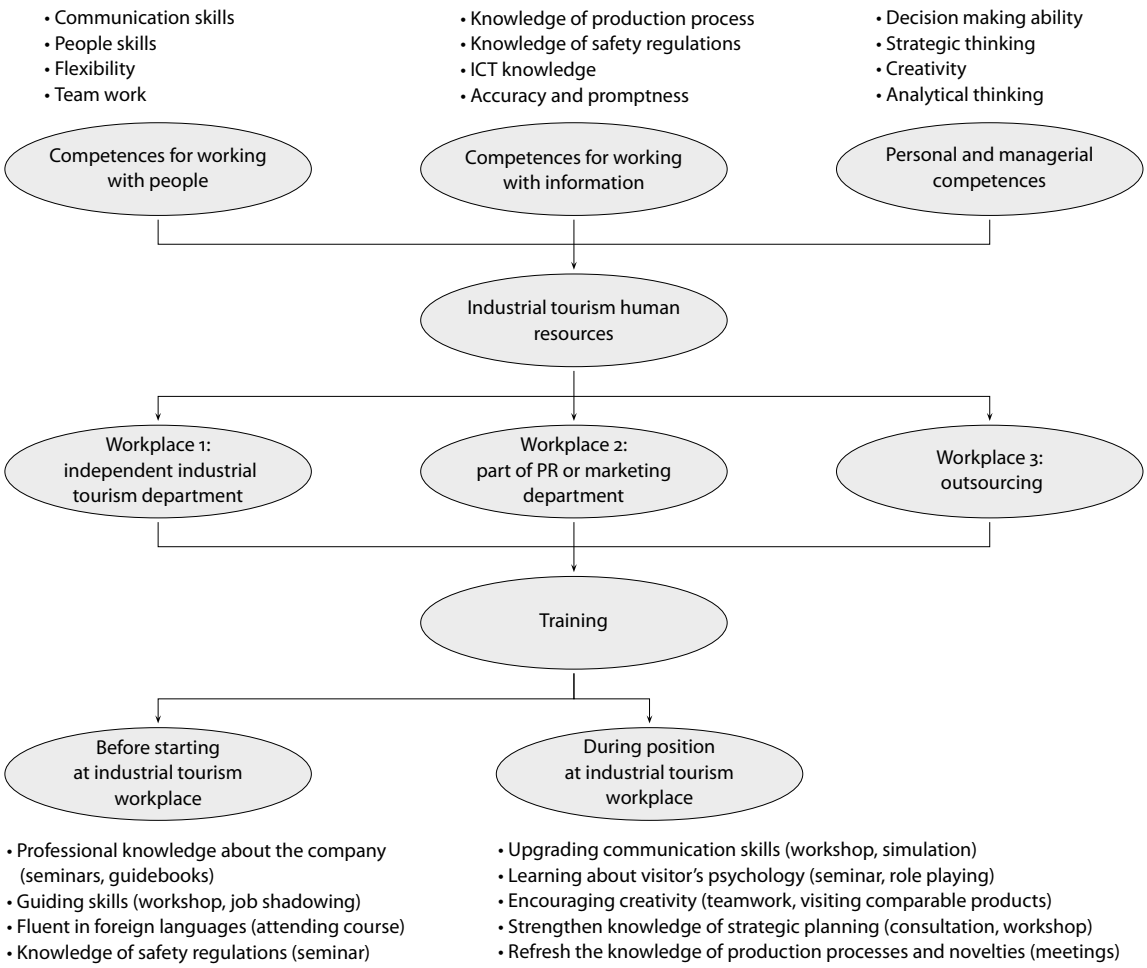

Figure 1 Industrial Tourism Human Resources

the correct way of presenting this information in order to attract the visitors.

All in all, one of the motives for the implementation of industrial tourism for the studied companies is marketing of their basic product, which is also done by the factory tour guide. In addition to the guide, industrial tourism also needs people who are strategically developing this tourism product. In one case, this person is also a guide; in other cases, this person is a part of management from marketing or PR department. Personnel at such positions also need the competence of strategic planning, analytical thinking, and creativity, which ensures that operational employees can provide quality industrial tourism services and strive for its continuous improvement, so that the product will be even more impressive for visitors and will represent the excellency of the visited company.

For employees to achieve basic competences, the final research question was addressed. The key finding is that studied companies provide a short list of required trainings. In companies that offer training, it is primarily placed at the beginning of an employee's job in industrial tourism, so he/she can acquire some expertise for the factory tour. This is done in the form of self-learning from a guidebook or with the help of experienced co-workers. Especially coaching and mentoring are among highly used new learning methods, which is characteristic of industrial tourism em-

ployee training as well as for general employee training (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2013). Insofar as industrial tourism has been developed as a stand-alone product of the company, the company offers more training possibilities, which are also aimed at the attainment of other competences not just professional knowledge of the factory. Thus, the guide can also be trained in communication skills and the psychology of visitors.

As shown in the literature review, studies about industrial tourism neglected this specific viewpoint; thus, research about human resources in industrial tourism brings new insight into the field. Based on the presented findings, we can propose that companies wishing to develop an independent industrial tourism product strategically plan for the staff they need for the implementation of it. They can follow the proposed model in Figure 1 and, according to the availability of employees, choose the most appropriate type of industrial tourism human resources. It is recommended that the guide, insofar as it is an independent workplace or an outsourced co-worker, will also be involved in the strategic planning of the development of this product, as it is he/she who daily encounters visitors and knows their needs and the situation of the premises where the tour occurs. By selecting a type of human resources, the company must also be aware of the competences it seeks for these employees.

Considering that, we recommend the involvement of guides in strategic decisions; the company should also look for personal and behavioural competences in guides in addition to the competences for working with people and the competences to work with information.

In any case, the company must provide constant employee training. Before starting their position in industrial tourism, employees must be equipped with professional knowledge of the company, knowledge of foreign languages and security provisions. Prior to starting work and during the course of work, the organisation must provide for the improvement of communication skills, people skills, as well as competences for encouraging creativity and knowledge of strategic planning. Therefore, the organisation should have a training plan for new and existing industrial tourism employees. When providing personal and knowledge development, the organisation will direct its focus towards sustainable human resource management and thus secure better working conditions for its employees.

The study has shown that there are quite a few differences between companies, as well as some similarities, based on which we revised the human resources in industrial tourism. The proposed industrial tourism human resources model could be used by organisations that want to improve their industrial tourism process or are only beginning to implement industrial tourism, thus choosing the type of human resources best suited to their situation and capabilities.

The research was conducted on the small sample of Slovenian companies that carry out industrial tourism. The sample itself is a considerable limitation of this research, since the number of factory visits should be higher to strengthen the results. In addition, multiple visits to each factory would provide greater insight into the process itself; however, due to the time limitation of the study, only one visit per factory was conducted. Nevertheless, we presume that the results are representative of the studied issue and provide a general picture of industrial tourism employees. Despite the fact that the situation is expected to be similar in other factories and countries, we propose that further research would be directed to companies abroad. In particular, the most important findings will be from the case studies of companies that have a long tradition of implementing industrial tourism and offer it as a stand-alone product. Furthermore, they can provide an environment for a more in-depth study of the industrial tourism employees not only focusing on their skills or training but also on their other characteristics, their background, the conditions in which they work, their performance, and service/experience delivery.

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Original Scientific Article

Monitoring of Visitors as a Tool of Protected Areas Management

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This article reviews the possibilities of using visitor monitoring in the management of a protected area in the example of the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area (PLA). The Moravian Karst is the largest and most significant karst area in the Czech Republic. Its location near a large city and its easy accessibility mean that some of the PLA's parts are faced with the negative impacts of overly intensive tourism on rare natural sites and protected species. While the presence of visitors in a protected area is desirable, it is necessary to regulate their activities in the area. The PLA management needs quality information for its decision making, such as on the current characteristics and behaviour of visitors. To obtain this information, primary marketing research was carried out at selected PLA sites from May to September 2018. A questionnaire survey was used to obtain data from 2,100 visitors and to define the Moravian Karst visitor profile. We found that most visitors were attracted to caves open to the public and the Macocha gorge and that almost a quarter of respondents were planning to return to the PLA within six months of questioning. A major challenge for the sustainable development of tourism in the area will be the fact that visitors to the caves are not interested in visiting other localities in the PLA. The data obtained about visitors will be used by the PLA management to formulate measures to redirect visitors from the most-visited locations to the less-visited ones.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, marketing research, visitor profile, destination management, protected landscape area, Moravian Karst

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Introduction

According to the UNWTO, sustainable tourism can be simply defined as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities' (UNEP & WTO, 2005, p. 12). When focusing on rural areas, where most protected areas are located, tourism has gained significance in recent years (Sánchez-Hernandéz et al., 2016). Sustainably managing tourism is a fundamental objective for most destinations. Tourism is often used as a tool for local development. Sustainable tourism brings advantages for all tourism stakeholders and society as a whole; for example, it helps to create jobs or to generate income. Staying in protected areas significantly improves the physical and mental state of visitors who relax there and learn interesting facts about the area (e.g., through a guided tour in a cave). This interesting and pleasant experience creates positive attitudes in visitors towards the protected area and contributes to the preservation acceptance of these areas by the general public (Pachrová et al., 2019). Tourists' encounters with nature also lead to their pro-environmental behaviour and activities (Mensah, 2019, p. 54). To strengthen the positive impacts of tourism on a rural destination, it is necessary to conserve resources and appreciate the existing heritage. For this purpose, a proactive awareness is promoted in the environmental area (Gallardo Vázquez et al., 2014). However, tourism also creates certain negative impacts, mainly when the carrying capacity of the destination is repeatedly exceeded (e.g., by excessive numbers of visitors); these aspects include pollution, increased erosion, and reduced population or even the extinction of various species can result (Pásková, 2008; Hübelová et al., 2016).

Managing protected areas has to combine both nature protection and the interests of visitors to ensure the sustainable development of the areas. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process, and it requires the constant monitoring of impacts (UNEP & WTO, 2005). Monitoring and research in protected areas have the potential to describe these various impacts of tourism, to decipher the causes and contexts, to use the acquired knowledge to stimulate desirable behaviour, and to optimise the activities of not only the protected area management but also all the relevant stakeholders, including visitors to the area (Zelenka et al., 2013, p. 61).

Finally, the local population should be managed so as to achieve sustainable development of protected areas, too. As mentioned by Sevšek and Slavič (2017) (among others), locals represent a long-term development factor of protected areas, and they should actively participate and cooperate with a protected area administration.

This article discusses some possibilities of using visitor monitoring in the management of a protected area in the example of the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area (PLA). We focus on the possibility of obtaining important, topical, and relevant data for the PLA's management decision-making from primary marketing research; this data describes the current characteristics of visitors and their behaviour. The authors would like to inspire the managers of other protected areas to use marketing research as an effective tool for visitor management and to intensify the discussion among tourism experts on the increasing and severe problem of overtourism in the most attractive nature areas.

The Moravian Karst is the largest and most significant karst area in the Czech Republic. Its location near a large city and its easy accessibility mean that some parts of the PLA face the negative impacts of too intensive tourism on rare natural sites and protected species. While the presence of visitors in a protected area is desirable, it is necessary to regulate their activities in the area. The PLA management needs quality information for its decision-making, such as on their characteristics and behaviours. To obtain this information, a questionnaire survey among 2,100 visitors was carried out in 2018, and the Moravian Karst visitor profile was defined based on it.

The present paper is structured as follows: the introduction is followed by the theoretical framework and a brief description of the PLA Moravian Karst. Next comes the methodology used, and the stated null hypotheses are described. Selected results of the case study and their discussion are then presented. The conclusions underscore the principal results and

contributions of the paper. Research limitations and future research lines are also provided.

Visitor Management as an Integral Part of Protected Areas' Management

According to Eagles (2007) and confirmed by other authors on tourism, such as Balmford et al. (2012), or Prouza (2019), the number of visitors to protected areas is increasing. This is especially true for the most attractive locations. Frequently, the number of visitors exceeds the limits recorded in the previous years. With growing numbers of visitors to protected areas, the burden that tourism puts on treasured sites is sharply increasing; therefore, the importance of managing protected areas is also increasing, and along with it the task to ensure not only the protection of nature and the landscape for future generations, but also to ensure the sustainable use of the area by the general public and thus the adequacy of tourism itself. Visitor management is an integral part of protected area management and, after the creation of a protected area, management specifying human use of the area is developed (Newsome & Moore, 2017, p. 264). In protected areas, there is not only unique nature but also places with sites of cultural heritage (e.g., caves with archaeological points of interest). Visitor management of protected areas should, therefore, not forget that some visitors have culturally oriented tourist motives (Belij, 2017).

Currently, destination management is considered the most effective way of planning and managing the sustainable development of tourism in any area. The basic principle of destination management is cooperation (Wang, 2008). General cooperation should ensure cooperation between all stakeholders in the tourism of the destination through the destination management organisation, which maintains mutually effective communication and facilitates the coordination of the activities in planning, organising, and decision-making that take place in the destination (Holešinská, 2012, p. 47). The management of the protected area should cooperate in various ways with the local destination management organisation in the destination management area, while not excluding that the organisation engaged in protected area management separately undertakes the activities of destination management in that area. Also important is the cooperation between nearby destinations (Ness et al., 2014), as well as those with protected areas; networking can help to solve many problems because it enables them, for example, to share good cases of management measures. Recently, the attention of professionals has often been focused on modern technologies and many changes they bring to tourism, including new models of destination management (Donald et al., 2019; Ivars-Baidal et al., 2019).

Destination management and, therefore, the management of the tourism of protected areas should always include visitor management in their activities. Sustainable visitor management is, according to Newsome and Moore (2017, p. 261), achieved as a combination of different approaches (e.g., controlling the size, type and spatial extent of visitor activities in combination with various educational programmes) and the application of modern technologies. Basic visitor management attempts to guide the flow of visitors in the time and space of the destination in such a way as to minimise the negative impacts of tourism on the area. Visitor management simultaneously attempts to positively motivate visitors on how to behave with concern for the environment in the given area.

Visitor management of the protected area can use many tools, for example, the marking and maintenance of hiking trails, the building of visitor centres, offering guided tours, introducing/regulating admission to the protected area, introducing limits on visitor numbers to the most vulnerable parts of protected areas, providing clear and up-to-date information available on the website of the protected area, among others.

A significant current challenge is using modern technologies for visitor management in protected areas, such as mobile learning in environmental interpretation and visitor education (Tan & Law, 2016). A tool that has not been mentioned yet, but is significant for decision-making processes in the management of protected areas, is primary research. Research should be done on various topics, such as natural and landscape conditions and their development, including changes caused by tourism activities in an area.

Uncontrolled and unmanaged visitors can easily and adversely affect the core values of a protected area. As revealed by Foin et al. (1977), visitors can cause changes in density and species composition of vegetation and animal populations. Protected area management sometimes has to control the resource damage from tourism being restrictive even if it can lead to backlash responses from visitors (Bixler et al., 1992). Typical measures of visitor management in karst areas are restrictive. Tour guide services are provided as the only legitimate way to visit caves (Tomic et al., 2019) and the determination of a maximum visitor capacity per one cave tour (Calaforra et al., 2003).

Visitor Monitoring in Protected Areas

For visitor management to be done effectively and efficiently, the management of the protected area needs a great deal of information about visitors. For this purpose, visitor monitoring within the protected area is carried out. Summary reviews of the locations where visitor monitoring studies were conducted over the past ten years, were given by Pickering et al. (2018).

The monitoring of visitors in protected areas is a specific and multidisciplinary field of research. Zelenka et al. (2013, p. 232) state that the monitoring of visitors to the natural and treasured landscapes of the area can vary according to the measurements conducted:

- monitoring the flow of visitors,
- monitoring the activities of visitors,
- monitoring the behaviour of visitors and conflicts between them,
- monitoring the characteristics of visitors and their segmentation.

The first mentioned type of visitor monitoring (i.e., monitoring the flow of visitors) is the one most widely used in the protected areas of the Czech Republic, which is usually narrowed down to monitoring the absolute numbers of visitors at selected locations. At present, mainly data from mobile operators or different visitor counters placed in the ground and operated by specialised firms are used for this purpose. In many national parks of America, moreover, the self-registration of visitors to the area is also common. A purely European approach is, for example, data taken from summit books (Muhar et al., 2002, p. 3). In the case in which entry to some locations in the protected area is not free, the data on the number of tickets sold is used to record the number of visitors (e.g., caves open to the public). Integrated visitor monitoring, monitoring using a combination of several methods for obtaining data (long-term video monitoring, counts by human observers, specific visitor interviews and route analysis by the GIS tools, etc.) seems to be the most effective approach (Arnberger & Hinterberger, 2004). This is very interesting, because a cost-effective approach to visitor monitoring can be using crowd-sourced data (Rice et al., 2019).

Other types of visitor monitoring, especially monitoring the characteristics of visitors and segmenting them, are much more difficult to implement systematically for protected area management. The data can be obtained, for example, from primary marketing research, while the disadvantage in obtaining data is the need for more time, personnel availability, expertise, and financial resources. Another innovative source of information about visitors is an analysis of big data from social media (Pickering et al., 2018). Supporting information is also usually provided by tourist information centres in the area, by the visitor centres of protected areas, or by the wardens and staff of protected areas.

As mentioned by Ballantyne et al. (2011), a visitor's experience can impact their future behaviour. Visitor satisfaction is the best tool for their attachment to the place (Trakolis & Harding, 1981). The quality of the experience and visitors' satisfaction with the services provided in protected areas should form the basis of visitor management. These two factors should systematically be surveyed as part of visitor monitoring (Eagles, 2007; Tonge & Moore, 2007; Huang et al., 2008; Samuel et al., 2008; Musa et al., 2017; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2019).

Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area

The Moravian Karst PLA is located in the south-eastern part of the Czech Republic, close to Brno. The PLA was declared there in 1956, covering an area of almost 100 km^2; it is the largest and most extensive karst area

in the Czech Republic, and more than 1,100 caves are located in Devonian limestone. Five cave systems are open to the public and are visited every year by approximately 400,000 people (see http://moravskykras.ochranaprirody.cz).

Karst areas are not typical tourist attractions; most of them have extraordinary scientific and social importance, not only because they represent remarkable geological and geomorphological phenomena, but they also preserve valuable evidence about the origin and evolution of life or the origin and development of human culture. The Moravian Karst area is a good example of this. From the scientific perspective, it is valuable, but for visitors to the area, the surface and subsurface of the karst landscape offer highly attractive features (extensive cave systems, abyss, sinkholes, sinking and gaining streams of water, deep canyon gorges, etc.). In addition, the PLA is interesting in that there are 21 species of bats and many invertebrate species unique in the world (endemic) have been described here. In 2004, the Punkva cave system was included by the Ramsar Convention among internationally significant wetlands. From the cultural and historical points of view, the importance of the Moravian Karst PLA is that it offers various evidence on the development of human society from the Palaeolithic Age to the present (Hübelová et al., 2017; Chalupa & Veselovský, 2018).

In the surveyed area of the Moravian Karst, the trend of increasing numbers of visitors can be seen: visitors to the caves increased between 2010 to 2018 by more than 22% (Štefka, personal communication, July 12, 2019). As stated by Pachrová et al. (2019), one of the main problems of tourism in the Moravian Karst is its pronounced seasonality: most visitors come to the PLA in the summer to visit the accessible caves and the Macocha gorge. In these locations, the intensity of tourism is already too strong, and damage is occurring to this unique environment. The PLA management, therefore, needs to take corrective measures within the visitor management of the area.

Mass tourism and insufficient protection of the unique underground of the Moravian Karst has destroyed more than half of the dripstone decoration in some parts of the caves (Štefka, 2013). Now, all dripstone decoration is strictly protected, and visitors are not allowed to touch it. The needs of visitors and needs of nature protection had to be harmonised regarding the use of lights in the caves. The extremely negative impact of excessively intensive lighting in the caves was described by Štefka (2016): the lights used for enabling visitors to see in the caves caused the appearance of green plants in large parts of the visited underground. This factor, absolutely foreign for the cave environment, had to be cleaned away. Unfortunately, cleaning caves was done by furbishing or by using chemicals that harmed the sensitive environment. As a result, rules for lighting in the caves, including the timing of light periods and the intensity of light, are carefully managed now.

The importance of setting strict limits for numbers of visitors per day to the caves was proved Lang et al. (2017), who discovered that when visitors were present the anthropogenic CO_2 flux in Výpustek Cave exceeded all other CO_2 fluxes and that intervals between visitor groups would have to be up to six hours long if the cave environment were to return to natural conditions. Karst places decorated with ice during winter (small caves near the surface) are also very attractive for visitors. As stated by Ždímal (2015), some visitors to the Moravian Karst crawl through small tunnels and destroy valuable local plant and animal communities. Moreover, new tourism activities potentially dangerous for the environment are being developed in the Moravian Karst now, such as single trails for mountain bikers (Fialová et al., 2019). The need for visitor management in the researched area is obvious. Nevertheless, according to Leslie (2015, p. 56), people, in general, express their support for all environmental initiatives, including conservation measures. Lorencová et al. (2014) conducted a questionnaire survey among visitors of Moravian Karst and stated that most tourists do not feel limited by conservation measures, which is a very positive finding for the PLA's Administration and sustainable development of tourism in the area.

Methodology

This paper aims to review the possibilities of using visitor monitoring in the management of a protected

area in the case study of the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area in the Czech Republic. The authors would like to inspire other protected area managements to use marketing research more often, because it gives unique and valuable data on visitor management. The results of the research will be used by the PLA Administration to create measures that will lead to a greater spread of visitors throughout the PLA to relieve congestion at the most attractive locations and will also lead to shifting more visitation to the spring and autumn months. The profile of the visitor to the Moravian Karst will serve as background material for creating the management strategy for the protected area in question. The PLA Administration asked for information about the characteristics of visitors and information about their values, attitudes, and behaviour. For effective visitor management, they need to know, for example, if there is a difference in the main reason for visiting the PLA between visitors who come for the first time and those who are returning to the area. For mostly marketing communication of the PLA, it is crucial to know where the visitors come from and if people from closer areas return to the Moravian Karst more often. Based on the mentioned needs of the PLA Administration, we stated and tested two null hypotheses (H0):

- H01 *There is no significant difference in the main reason for visiting the Moravian Karst PLA between first-time visitors and those who are returning to the area repeatedly.*
- H02 *For visitors to the Moravian Karst, there is no dependence between repeat visits to the protected area and the distance of the home of the respondent.*

This article presents selected results of extensive primary research among visitors to the Moravian Karst. The research was carried out by the Department of Travel & Tourism at the College of Polytechnics Jihlava (VŠPJ) in cooperation with the PLA management of the Moravian Karst. The research was carried out using a quantitative survey method of standardised questionnaires from May to September 2018. The questionnaire had a total of 19 questions (closed, semi-closed, scaled) and was distributed in four languages (Czech, English, German, and Polish). Data were obtained using the face-to-face survey with visitors at ten designated PLA locations throughout the protected area. The data collected by trained interviewers were anonymous, with the choice of respondents consistently random. In order to prevent any distortion of the surveyed results, for example due to bad weather, the data was collected on different days of the week at different times of the day. A total of 2,100 questionnaires, properly completed, were obtained.

To verify the stated null hypotheses, attention will be given to the geographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics of the respondents. The initial data obtained were processed, analysed, and interpreted with mathematical and statistical methods. Concerning the methods, analysis and synthesis were used. Microsoft Excel and Statistica 13 software were used to process the data.

The existence of a conclusive dependence between the selected characteristics of the respondents was proved using the Pearson's chi-square test of independence (χ^2), provided that a maximum of 20% of the expected frequencies was less than 5. For the Pearson statistic χ^2, the number of degrees of freedom (DF) is also given for completeness. On the basis of the probability of the distribution of chi-square, the p-value was observed for the null hypothesis (assuming the independence of the two selected signs), which is the lowest level of significance for which the null hypothesis can be rejected ($p < 0.05$). The observed χ^2 was then interpreted using the method of correspondence analysis. Correspondence analysis is a multivariate statistical method that allows the display and summary of a set of data in a two-dimensional graphic form. It is traditionally applied to contingency tables; correspondence analysis decomposes the chi-squared statistic associated with this table into orthogonal factors. The distance between single points is defined as a chi-squared distance. This analysis aims to reduce the multidimensional space of row and column profiles and to save as much of the original data as possible (Hebák et al., 2007). The total variance of the data matrix is measured by the inertia (Greenacre, 1984), which resembles a chi-square statistic but is calculated based on relative observed and expected frequencies.

Table 1 Sociodemographic Structure of Respondents

Respondents characteristics		*N*	%
Gender	Women	1,028	49
	Men	1,072	51
	Total	2,100	100
Age	Up to 24 years	294	14
	25–34 years	512	24
	35–49 years	843	40
	50–59 years	285	14
	60+	166	8
	Total	2,100	100
Education	Without high school	452	22
	High school	1,217	58
	University	431	20
	Total	2,100	100

All tables and figures in this article are the joint work of the authors.

Results and Discussion

During the primary research carried out, 2,100 questionnaires properly completed by visitors to the Moravian Karst were obtained (N = 2,100). The sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1, which indicates that, in a representative sample of visitors to the PLA, the share of men is 51% and women 49%. It can be concluded from this result that men and women visit the Moravian Karst in equal proportion.

All age categories were represented in the research. People aged 35–49 were the predominant group in the structure of visitors, accounting for 40% of the total number of respondents (Table 1). Nearly a quarter of visitors (24%) are in the age segment of 25–34 years old. The age categories of 24 years old and less, and 50–59 had an equal share of 14% of the total number of respondents. The least numerically represented age category of visitors were seniors (i.e., 60 and older). The age structure of visitors is very similar to the one observed by Lorencová et al. (2014) in 2013, so we can conclude that in a long-term view a majority of the PLA's visitors is between 25 to 49 years of age.

The structure of visitors to the PLA according to the highest level of education reached shows that almost 80% of visitors had at least a high school degree, and one fifth of the total number of respondents had a university education (Table 1). The remaining fifth, (i.e., 452 respondents) had a basic education or apprenticeship. This number, however, included 195 secondary school students (9% of the total respondents), who can be expected to continue with their education. The results of our research show that visitors to the surveyed PLA are mostly well educated, which confirms the trend of tourism in protected areas as published by Eagles (2007) and confirmed by Zelenka et al. (2013, p. 70), as well as Newsome and Moore (2017, p. 261). These authors suggest that protected areas are exploited mainly by educated people expecting an experience full of interesting information and things to do, but who also expect sophisticated services and management of the area. Visitor management of the Moravian Karst should take this into account, because the right choice of marketing tools and provision of quality services could quite easily motivate this group of visitors to make repeat visits, even outside the main summer season; it is also possible, given these visitors' interest in new information and experiences, to redirect them to less exposed tourist parts of the PLA.

Due to the age structure of the respondents (Table 1), it is not surprising that the Internet is the main medium from which visitors to the PLA get information for their visit (31% of respondents). The second most important source of data (27% of respondents) is information from friends and relatives, transmitted not only by word-of-mouth but also through various social media, which underscores the need of visitor management of the protected area to have a clear, updated, and interesting presentation of visitor services on the internet, as well as the need to provide quality services to receive positive reviews and recommendations. For visitor management of the researched area, it is crucial to recognise that the combination of these two sources of information makes it possible to reach the majority of visitors, and some of them can certainly be motivated to visit (e.g., a selected cave in winter), when they will have the unique experience of the karst in wintertime with a minimum number of other vis-

itors, and the cave will probably be pleasantly warm (compared to outdoor temperatures).

In the context of the geographic structure of respondents, whether they came from the Czech Republic or abroad was determined. The questionnaire showed that the Moravian Karst is a destination mainly for domestic tourism. Of the total respondents, only 4% were foreign visitors. In the structure of foreign visitors, most respondents were from Slovakia; the second most frequently cited country of origin was Poland; the third was Russia. The largest representation of Slovaks among visitors from abroad also prove Lorencová et al. (2014). It can have various reasons, for example, not too great a distance of the Moravian Karst from Slovakia, or that many Slovaks live in the Czech Republic. In the ratio of Czech and foreign visitors, the results of our research contradict the information of the Moravian Karst Cave Administration, which indicates that visitors from abroad account for approximately one-third of the total number of visitors to the area (Enviweb.cz, 2017). It needs to be taken into account, however, that the information from the cave administration is based on the tickets sold to publicly-accessible caves, while our data were obtained at various locations throughout the protected area. Both sources of information nevertheless agree on the most common countries of origin of foreign visitors as well as on the fact that the number of visitors to the PLA, for whom the main reason for their visit to the protected area is a tour of the caves, accounted for less than half of the total number of visitors to the area (Table 2). This agreement confirms, among other things, the relevance of the results of our research. The authors of the paper are, therefore, inclined to see the results of their research as corresponding better to the real situation in relation to the entire PLA, and so the share of foreign visitors to the Moravian Karst is significantly lower than the overall number of visitors given by Enviweb.cz (2017).

For visitor management and maintaining the sustainable tourism of the PLA, the research implies the positive fact that almost 70% of visitors return to this protected area, 30% even repeatedly (i.e., they had been there at least five times at the time of data collection) (Table 2). Of the total number of respondents

Table 2 Reason for Visiting the Moravian Karst PLA in Dependence on the Frequency of the Destination Visit

Reason for visit	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Exploring natural attractions (caves)	A	360	391	177	928
	S	55.4	47.9	27.9	
Sightseeing	A	48	50	26	124
	S	7.4	6.1	4.1	
Relaxation	A	80	155	170	405
	S	12.3	19.0	26.8	
Hiking, cycling, etc.	A	89	114	162	365
	S	13.7	14.0	25.5	
House of Nature of the Moravian Karst	A	13	28	8	49
	S	2.0	3.4	1.3	
Sport	A	8	8	9	25
	S	1.2	1.0	1.4	
Work	A	13	14	15	42
	S	2.0	1.8	2.4	
Entertainment	A	4	28	23	55
	S	0.6	3.4	3.6	
Visit to relatives/friends	A	28	22	34	84
	S	4.3	2.7	5.4	
Transit	A	7	6	10	23
	S	1.1	0.7	1.6	
Total	A	650	816	634	2,100
	R	31	39	30	100
	S	100	100	100	–

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency: A – absolute, S – column relative (%), R – relative (%), (2) 1st visit, (3) 2nd–4th visits, (4) 5th and further visits, (5) total. $\chi^2 = 167.2909$, DF = 18, $p = 0.0000$.

($N = 2{,}100$), 650 were visiting the area for the first time, (i.e., 31%).

The statistical processing of the null hypothesis H01 with Person's chi-square test showed a significant dependence between the main reason for visiting the Moravian Karst and the frequency of visiting this protected area. When testing the independence of the two variables, the values of the test statistic $\chi^2 = 167.2909$ and $p = 0.0000$ were calculated; the H01 null hypoth-

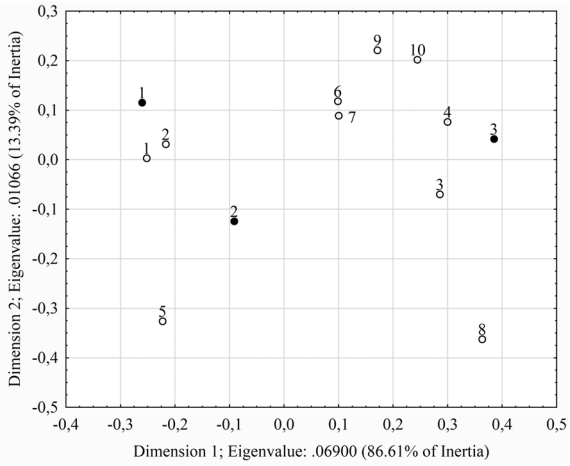

Figure 1 The Correspondence Analysis: The Dependence of the Reason for Visiting the Moravian Karst PLA to the Frequency of the Destination Visit (2D plot of row and column coordinates, dimension: 1 × 2; input table (rows × columns): 3 × 10; standardization: row and column profiles; dark – visit frequency, light – reason for visit)

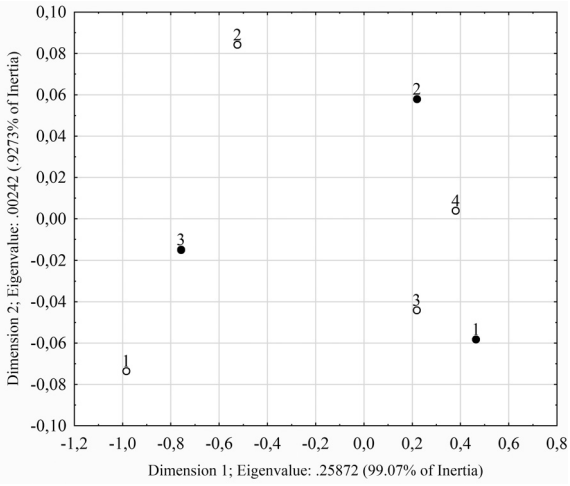

Figure 2 The Correspondence Analysis: The Dependence of the Distance from Visitor's Residence to the Frequency of the Moravian Karst PLA Visits (2D plot of row and column coordinates, dimension: 1 × 2; input table (rows × columns): 3 × 4; standardization: row and column profiles; dark – visit frequency, light – residence distance)

esis was rejected at the level of significance of 5% (Table 2). The corresponding analysis of examining both variables suggests that there is a significant difference between the main reason for visiting the destination among first-time visitors and among visitors repeatedly coming back (i.e., those who have been to the area at least five times) (Figure 1).

The first visit to the PLA is most often logically focused on becoming acquainted with the most famous attractions in the area (i.e., the caves), while for repeat visitors the predominant reason is the desire for active leisure in the beautiful natural environment, whether for relaxing walks, hiking, or biking. While the majority of first-time visitors (55.4%) said their main reason for visiting the PLA was to 'explore natural attractions – caves,' it was the reason for only 27.9% of repeat visitors.

In contrast, only 26% of first-time visitors indicated active leisure in the PLA natural environment, but it was the reason for 52.3% of repeat visitors to the area (Table 2). Moreover, one quarter of respondents were planning to return to the PLA within six months of questioning, and 52% of respondents want to come back too, but not so soon. A major challenge for the sustainable development of tourism in the area will be the fact that visitors to the caves are not interested in visiting other localities in the PLA during their visit. For visitor management of the PLA, these research results are significant in that they demonstrate that repeat visitors are greatly interested in other locations of the protected area than the accessible tourist caves and the Macocha gorge, and they need much more attention in the visitor management in future.

We can also see that Moravian Karst has some specific characteristics in terms of the main reasons for visiting this area. Visitors come here mainly to explore the natural attractions, then to relax and to do sports. Entertainment was the main reason for less than 3% of respondents. In contradistinction, Navrátil et al. (2015) revealed that most important for tourists in the protected areas in the southern part of the Czech Republic are relaxation, entertainment, and recreational sports activities.

Furthermore, the stated H02 null hypothesis was tested, for which the assumption was made that among visitors to the Moravian Karst PLA, repeat visits to the

Table 3 Distance from Visitor's Residence in Dependence on the Frequency of the Moravian Karst PLA Visits

Residence distance		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Up to 20 km	A	16	52	206	274
	S	2	6	33	
21–50 km	A	52	135	211	398
	S	8	17	33	
51–100 km	A	153	160	82	395
	S	24	20	13	
Above 100 km	A	429	469	135	1,033
	S	66	57	21	
Total	A	650	816	634	2,100
	R	31	39	30	100
	S	100	100	100	–

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency: A – absolute, S – column relative (%), R – relative (%), (2) 1st visit, (3) 2nd–4th visits, (4) 5th and further visits, (5) total. $\chi^2 = 548.398$, DF = 6, $p = 0.0000$.

area are not dependent on the distance of the respondent's home. Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant statistical dependence of both variables, because $\chi^2 = 548.398$ and $p = 0.0000$ (Table 3); we, therefore, reject the H02 null hypothesis at the significance level of 5%. Figure 2, a biplot created using the correspondence analysis method, shows that respondents residing within 20 km of the surveyed site are clearly the most frequent visitors to the Moravian Karst. Two-thirds of repeat visitors to the area reside within 50 km of the PLA. Interestingly, more than a fifth of repeat visitors to the surveyed area come from a distance of over 100 km. Almost 70% of first-time visitors come from a distance of over 100 km from the PLA (Table 3). For visitor management of the protected area, it is recognised that people not only from the surrounding area are repeatedly returning to the PLA, again important information. This fact confirms the high attractiveness of the area for tourism, and management could use it in their marketing activities, especially in an effort to disperse visitors across the PLA, ideally in combination with the previous finding regarding the main reasons for repeat visits by the respondents.

Conclusion

Protected areas around the world are seeing a growing public interest in visiting them, and in many places valuable natural and landscape features are under threat from overly heavy a tourist burden. This is the current problem of the Moravian Karst PLA, the largest and most popular karst area in the Czech Republic.

This article shows the possibilities of using visitor monitoring in the visitor management of the protected area in the example of the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area and serves as a case study that could inspire other protected area managements to use primary marketing research more often as an effective tool for obtaining data needed for sustainable tourism management of the given area. The data obtained directly from visitors enables not only the creation of their exact profiles and segmentation of them, but also provides valuable data on the motivation to visit the area, data on the planned and real behaviour of visitors, their satisfaction with their stay in the destination, and similar.

The results of the research into the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area showed that this protected area is visited by men and women in balanced proportion and that the structure of visitors is significantly predominated by persons aged 35–49. Furthermore, almost 80% of visitors to the surveyed PLA have at least completed secondary education. This fact should be exploited by the visitor management of the Moravian Karst PLA, as this group of visitors can be easily motivated for repeated visits and can be redirected to less exposed parts of the PLA. The results of the research also show that the surveyed area is primarily a destination for domestic tourism and that the main motive for visiting the destination is, for almost half of the total number of visitors, to become acquainted with tourist–accessible caves. The vast majority of visitors (almost 70%) return to the Moravian Karst PLA and 30% of the total number even repeatedly.

The stated H01 null hypothesis, which assumed there is no significant difference in the main reason for visiting the Moravian Karst PLA between first-time visitors and those who repeatedly return to the area, was not confirmed. The statistical processing of the

data by Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant dependence between both variables analysed. It has been proven that the first visit to the PLA is most often focused on becoming acquainted with the most famous attractions of the area (the caves) while repeat visitors are mostly motivated by the desire for active leisure (relaxing on walks, hiking or biking). This result for visitor management of the PLA is significant in that repeat visitors have shown great interest in other areas of the protected area than the tourist-accessible caves and the Macocha gorge.

The stated H02 null hypothesis, which assumed that repeat visits to the Moravian Karst PLA do not depend on the distance of the respondent's residence, was also not confirmed. Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant statistical dependence of both variables. Respondents residing within 20 km of the place of inquiry are clearly the most frequent visitors returning to the PLA. With the combination of the knowledge that returning visitors to the PLA are more interested in getting to know new sites of the protected area, visitor management of the Moravian Karst PLA should also work on trying to relieve the most burdened sites.

Our article has provided much new information about the profile of visitors to the Moravian Karst PLA, which is practical in the management of visitors to this area. The primary limitation of the research conducted is that the data collected in the field was not year-round and did not cover at least one whole tourist season. However, due to the chosen methodology of data collection and well-trained interviewers, our research results are sufficiently representative. The continuous collection and subsequent evaluation of data on visiting a destination are essential for the sustainable management of tourism in any area. Our research should, therefore, be followed up by further research, which would be conducted throughout the year and provide, for example, information on the prevailing motivation to visit the PLA outside the main tourism season and during the winter.

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Original Scientific Article

Congress Destination Attractiveness: The Case of Supply-Side of Business Tourism in Slovenia

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The purpose of the article is to research which attractiveness attributes of a congress destination are those that are important for visiting the congress destination and association meeting, namely from the point of view of the supply-side of business tourism, meaning meeting planners (buyers), suppliers, intermediaries and special agencies. The article redefines the dimensions of visiting a congress destination and the research concept of the supply-side of business tourism. On this basis, we developed a new multidimensional construct (model) of congress destination visit, which takes into consideration three aspects: the destination, venue and business event aspects as the foundation of the supply-side of congress tourism. Based on previous research, we developed a model of attractiveness attributes for each individual aspect which contributes to the visiting of the congress destination. The aim of the research is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the supply-side of congress tourism in a multidimensional analysis of attractiveness attributes of a congress destination which constitute important factors for visiting.

Keywords: congress destination attractiveness, business tourism, conference attributes, congress destination attributes, venue attributes, congress destination visit

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Theoretical Background

In the last decades, there has been an exponential growth in the number of events, which also applies to business events and congress tourism in general (Getz & Page, 2016). According to the ICCA (see http://www.iccaworld.com), the period between 1963 and 2017 shows a considerable growth, both in terms of international association meetings as well as the number of attendees. With the advent of the economic crisis over ten years ago, a decrease in the number of meetings was recorded as well, which, however, has been on the rise again in the last few years (The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, 2016).

It was the growth in the volume of business meetings that prompted researchers to explore both the reasons and the attributes of attractiveness of a congress destination. This is the central space where a business meeting (conference) takes place and where suppliers, organisers and attendees meet. There are different definitions in literature in the conceptualisation of the congress destination (Oppermann, 1996a, 1996b; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rogers, 1998; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001; Petersen, 2005; Davidson & Rogers, 2006; Rogers, 2008), and these are often not uniform, especially when defining its dimensions and spatial framework. A review of literature shows that a congress destination can be defined as a spatial, substantive and service entity. Clas-

sifying congress destinations based on the substantive principle means classifying them according to the different types of business meetings (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001), such as congress destination, incentive destination, or exhibition destination (Lu & Cai, 2009).

A narrower understanding of a congress destination as a spatial entity means understanding a destination as a location where a congress will take place (Rogers, 1998; Baloglu & Love, 2005; Millar & Kerr, 2009; Shin, 2009; Del Chiappa, 2012). A destination is defined in a broader sense by Swarbrooke and Horner (2001), who understand it as the central location or place of business travel with the purpose to attend a business meeting. At the same time, they point out the need to distinguish between the terms 'congress destination' and 'congress venue,' as a destination is to be understood as an area, whereas a venue is to be seen as an independent unit of said area, meaning a 'destination' is considered to be a broader term compared to a 'venue.' Nevertheless, we found quite a few examples in literature where a congress venue is interpreted as a destination (Robinson & Callan, 2005; Millar & Kerr, 2009; Shin, 2009; Del Chiappa, 2012). Oral and Whitfield (2010) use the terms 'macro-destination,' which includes the attributes of a broader destination, and 'micro-destination,' including venue, accommodation and restaurant services.

To view the concept of a congress destination in a more complex manner, the destination should also be understood as a space that provides suitable services and amenities for a business meeting. Literature thus most often mentions the concept of a congress destination as a space that acts as a host destination for the organisation of congresses (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rogers, 1998; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001; Rogers, 2008). However, according to Davidson and Rogers (2006), and Rogers (2008), a destination is also referred to as a combination of different attributes, factors, attractions, services and stakeholders in a specific space or location.

Fundamental to the existence of a congress destination and congress tourism is the content of its services, meaning congress-related products. The congress programme can be understood as the essence of a business event, as content is what defines it. The latter is also the basic motive for the travel of the business tourist, and the basic motive of the meeting planner (organiser) for the organisation of the conference. Zhang et al. (2007) view the core congress product in a similar way, arguing that the essential product of a conference is its programme.

The understanding of the attendance of a conference and destination is often associated with the understanding of the motives and factors contributing to the decision to attend a conference and thus to visit the destination. In congress tourism, attendance as a quantitative category is very often mentioned in relation to the performance of either the meeting planner (organiser), supplier or the destination. The criteria we see is either the number of attendees or, more often, the number of conferences held over a given period (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Nelson & Rys, 2000; Fawzy & Samra, 2008; Elston & Draper, 2012). In terms of content, attendance is a category that means attending a conference (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Comas & Moscardo, 2005; Petersen, 2005; Robinson & Callan, 2005; Severt et al., 2009; Lee & Back, 2010; Tanford et al., 2012; Ramirez et al., 2013), meaning that an attendee is understood as a person who attends the conference programme. Oppermann and Chon (1997) already mentioned different segments of meeting participants and the related different activity of attending or visiting both the conference and the destination, so the attendance category can be understood in two manners. In a narrow sense, the attendance of a conference is understood as the attendance of a conference participant in the substantive program of the conference taking place in a specific venue; more broadly, it also means visiting a congress destination. As authors (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Upchurch et al., 2000; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Tanford et al., 2012; Oral & Whitfield, 2010; Del Chiappa, 2012) often point out destination attractiveness attributes as important factors as well, attendance is understood in its broader meaning.

As Getz and Page (2016) point out, researchers pay considerable attention to questions about reasons and motives for attending (visiting), loyalty, or attractiveness attributes of attraction of a congress destination.

We find that the authors were looking for models and approaches that would provide the most comprehensive answer and solutions that would give the meeting planners and suppliers at the destination a competitive advantage and have a positive impact on the visit and experience of all destination stakeholders. DiPietro et al. (2008) believe that the primary goal of meeting planners is to find a destination that meets the goals of the planned congress, as this is what the number of attendees will depend on. Breiter and Milman (2006, p. 1370), however, are convinced that 'the destination where the congress will take place is important for a participant in deciding whether or not to attend' Whitfield et al. (2014) found that research usually includes three most important directions, namely, research of the process of choosing a location or venue (Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Robinson & Callan, 2005; Fawzy & Samra, 2008); research of the attractions of the destination or venue for the participant (Breiter & Milman, 2006; Whitfield & Weber, 2011; Weber & Chon, 2002), or research of the congress destination image (Oppermann, 1996b; Baloglu & Love, 2005). Considerable research has also been dedicated to satisfaction and loyalty to the destination (Choi, 2005; Lu & Cai, 2009; Lee & Back, 2010; Tanford et al., 2012).

The analysis of the selected papers of research on destination attractiveness attributes from the point of view of the meeting planner shows that they are most often associated with the attributes of accommodation and congress venue capacity, as they appear in all research. Hotel and venue services are often considered simultaneously, confirming the professional practice that most congresses take place in hotels (Rogers, 2008; Robinson & Callan, 2005). In terms of frequency, following immediately behind is the cost/expense aspect, especially the costs within the destination, the cost of the venue and the accommodation. Attributes related to the attractiveness of congress halls ranked third in terms of frequency, with the capacity and services provided being the leading attributes. Destination attributes are very often associated with the accessibility of the destination itself; only four of the studies analysed do not mention accessibility as such (Edelstein & Benini, 1994; Robinson & Callan, 2002). The accessibility attribute is not always understood in terms of physical accessibility, but also as an attribute of destination affordability (Nelson & Rys, 2000). Other less frequently mentioned attributes of destination attractiveness are out-of-congress facilities, the image of the destination, security, professional congress staff, local hospitality, attractions, local support and others.

On the other hand, we were also interested in establishing how the attributes of destination attractiveness were evaluated from the point of view of the attendee, that is, the one who was already perceived by Var et al. (1985) as an important factor when deciding to attend a conference and thus visit the destination. In an analysis of selected studies, we established that the most important attribute of attractiveness or motive for attending is the destination or conference location; Mair and Thompson (2009) are in fact convinced this is one of the most important attributes, with accessibility and attractiveness being at the forefront. It is closely related to the dimensions of accessibility and attraction of a destination, which are, as a redefinition of the Oppermann-Chon model (1997), supported by Zhang et al. (2007). The dimension of accessibility is often expressed by the distance to the host destination, the travel time, and transport connections, as well as the formalities that need to be arranged to enter the country, whereas the dimension of attraction is expressed with the image of the destination, its climate, the hospitality of the locals, and the culinary and leisure selection at the destination, as well as the past experience of an individual. According to Jago and Deery (2005), the attractiveness of a destination is also an important element for meeting planners, who, as a result of its attractiveness, attract more visitors at the conference and thus higher revenue. In terms of content, the destination is also associated with its image, environment and climate and, ultimately, its reputation (Whitfield et al., 2014). As emphasised by Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) and Whitfield et al. (2014), the opportunity to visit a destination is not to be neglected as an additional form of motivation to visit. One of the most common attributes is the attractiveness of the content or the conference program. This is closely linked to the attributes of networking and professional development, career opportunities, vali-

dation and reputation in the profession, and personal advancement (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Lee & Back, 2008; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Shin, 2009; Whitfield et al., 2014).

Another important attractiveness attribute is the cost of attending a conference at a destination, in particular the amount of registration fees, transportation and accommodation (authors). Important attributes that attendees think of are also those that may lead them not to attend the conference, and were referred to as 'intervening opportunities' by Oppermann and Chon (1997, p. 186). These may be more attractive conferences with more prominent key-note speakers, or those taking place at the same time, as noted by Mair and Thompson (2009). Authors also classify in this same group the overlaps with the holidays of an individual (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Zhang et al., 2007; Mair & Thompson, 2009), whereas some also include the health of the individual (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Mair & Thompson, 2009) or overlaps with other conferences in this category (Mair & Thompson, 2009), especially as it is often pointed out that participants are 'time-poor' (Jago & Deery, 2005; Yoo & Chon, 2008).

An overview of research shows that the content representation of individual attractiveness attributes is very diverse and structured differently. We found that, in terms of meaning, they could be split into multiple dimensions, such as destination, conference/content, and venue attributes. Whitfield et al. (2014) also noted that attractiveness attributes could be divided into destination attributes, event attributes, and facilities attributes.

We found that in the research done so far, the biggest gap can be seen in the approach when considering the attributes of destination attractiveness. Firstly, there is no approach that would simultaneously check the willingness to visit a congress destination through the various groups of attractiveness attributes that are typical of a congress destination. Secondly, there is no approach that would verify the attributes of attractiveness based on the opinions of the supply-side of business tourism as a whole, as it is composed of meeting planners (buyers), suppliers, intermediaries, and special agencies as defined by Swarbrooke and Horner (2001), although Var et al. (1985)

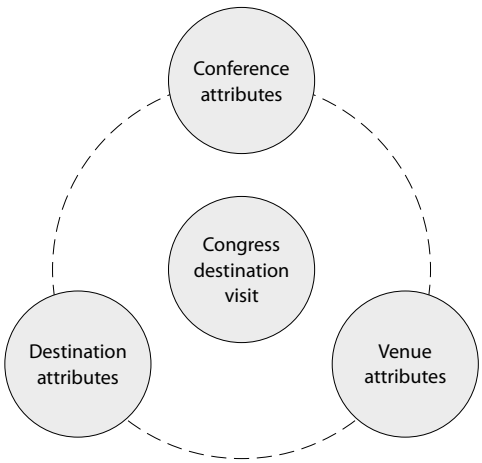

Figure 1 Multi-Dimensional Construct of Congress Destination Visit

already pointed out that the common goal of both the associations (organisers) and the host destination offering congress services, is maximizing the number of conference attendees. Our way of thinking is supported by the findings of some authors (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Jago & Deery, 2005; Yoo in Chon, 2010; Whitfield et al., 2014), who state that the factors and attributes of a congress destination should be evaluated from different perspectives.

The main purpose of business travel is precisely to travel to a destination for business interests, where business travellers meet as part of the event by attending a congress (event) held at a congress venue at the congress destination. On this basis, we assume that the visit of the congress destination is the result of a combination of three factors – destination, venue, and the conference (event) – and introduce a multidimensional congress destination visit construct consisting of the group of destination attractiveness attributes, the group of conference attractiveness attributes, and the group of venue attractiveness attributes.

Methodology

The purpose of the research is to find those factors of attractiveness of a congress destination that service providers and organisers of business meetings consider to be important in choosing a congress desti-

nation. We designed a multidimensional construct of congress destination attractiveness as a starting point for empirical research. The necessity for designing a multidimensional construct was also based on the opinion of the authors of Whitfield et al. (2014), who propose to address the attractiveness attributes on several levels.

Based on the substantive analysis of the literature we incorporated different aspects in each group of attractiveness attributes within the construct, and identified them with individual elements. The group of destination attributes thus included destination accessibility, attractiveness, services and conditions at the destination, as well as the reputation of the destination. The ones we classified as venue attributes include venue services, accommodation, type of venue, venue accessibility, congress hall features, and venue reputation. The elements of the group of attractiveness attributes include business opportunities, networking, intervening opportunities, the content of the conference and its reputation.

The multidimensionality of the construct of congress destination attractiveness was tested using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). In general, factor analysis is used to analyse phenomena that cannot be directly measured. The purpose of exploratory factor analysis was to identify relevant factors by individual attractiveness groups. Given the relatively large number of researched attributes, dictated by the complexity of the case under study, factor analysis was performed separately for individual attribute groups.

Research Sample and Instrument

The research sample consisted of organisations on the supply-side of business tourism in Slovenia. Their number can roughly be estimated based on the results of the Congress Capacity Study of Slovenia (Sikošek et al., 2014). Congress venue suppliers account for the largest number, estimated at 208 in the research; there are far fewer other supply-side organisations, such as professional congress organisers (PCOS), destination management companies (DMCS), incentive travel agencies, convention visitors bureaus (CVBS), carriers, caterers, and event agencies. It is difficult to estimate the volume of meeting planners, as it is usually a trade secret of suppliers. Robinson and Callan (2002) encountered the same dilemma of determining the population of meeting planners, where they reported on the absence of a central client list. The sample of meeting planners includes those who organised association meetings at least in the last year, or are suppliers of congress services in the territory of Slovenia. We obtained their addresses based on our own research; part of the meeting planners' addresses were obtained with the help of PCOS, CVBS and DMCS. The questionnaire was sent to 1558 addresses.

The introductory part of the questionnaire was aimed at obtaining data on the profile of the respondent with closed-ended questions. The central part was substantive in nature, and was divided into three sets of statements, separated into: destination attributes, conference attributes, and venue attributes.

Surveys were conducted over a three-week period using the online survey technique using the 1KA web application. After three weeks of surveying, after having exhausted the willingness of respondents to participate, we received 171 returned questionnaires, which represents a 10.8% response rate. Out of 171 questionnaires received, 49 were excluded as ineligible for further analysis due to the excessive number of missing answers. Thus, 122 survey questionnaires were included in the analysis. The data were analysed using SPSS version 22.

Results

Sample Profile

Out of the 122 respondents, 75% were women, and 25% were men. Their age structure indicates that most of them are in their work intensive period: 35% are between 31 and 40 years old, 27% are between 41 and 50, 26% of people in the sample are over 51, while at least 11% are in the 18–30 age group. Nearly half (46%) of respondents have a college or university degree, followed by those with a postgraduate degree (18%), and only 2% have a high school degree, and no one has only a primary school education.

The results also show that the respondents have extensive work experience in the organisation where they are currently employed: the largest proportion of respondents have more than ten years of experience,

Table 1 Working Time (Period of Employment) of Respondents in the Current Organisation

Period of employment (in years)	*f*	%
No answer	12	9.8
Up to 1 year	5	4.1
More than 1 year up to 3 years	7	5.7
More than 3 years up to 5 years	18	14.8
More than 5 years up to 10 years	27	22.1
More than 10 years	53	43.4
Total	122	100.0

Table 2 Current Position of the Respondents in the Working Organisation

Job position	*f*	%
Middle management position	27	22.1
Upper/high management position	20	16.4
Researcher, professor, teacher	19	15.6
Congress management	17	13.9
Marketing, sales	15	12.3
Other	11	9.0
No answer	13	10.7
Total	122	100.0

and almost a quarter have between five and ten years of work experience in the meetings industry. Other researchers (Baloglu & Love, 2005) provided similar results.

Most of the supply-side organisations surveyed (22.1%) hold a leading position, such as area manager. Those in managerial positions, such as directors, account for 16.4%. Researchers, professors and teachers account for 15.6% (Table 1). There are 13.9% of employees in congress management, such as organisation, administration, technical service, etc., while a slightly lower percentage is employed in marketing and sales (12.3%). For 13 of the service providers, we were not able to obtain data on their workplaces.

In identifying the specifics of the sample, we were also interested in the type of supplier. Respondents had the possibility to answer several questions at once, as practice shows that each supplier could perform several activities simultaneously (e.g. venue and PCO).

Table 3 Type of Supply-Side Organisation

Type	*f*	%
Meeting planner ('buyer')	42	36.2
Science/research institution	31	26.7
Venue	30	25.9
CVB/DMO	11	9.5
PCO	9	7.8
DMC, incentive, teambuilding services	8	6.9
Other	16	13.8

On average, they stated 1.3. The structure of supply-side organisations indicates that a considerable proportion of survey participants were meeting planners, as in 36.2% of cases, the respondents stated that they were either clients or organisers of the meetings (Table 3). More than a quarter (26.7%) of respondents work in a scientific research institution, and these are often meeting planners. Slightly fewer (25.9%) are venue suppliers, who, however, stated that they were representatives of a hotel with conference facilities ($n = 14$), a congress hotel ($n = 5$), a congress or exhibition centre ($n = 4$), or a special venue ($n = 1$).

Further on, we were also interested in how many conferences are organised by the respondents. Half of them stated that their organisation organises up to five conferences annually, and just under a fifth (18.0%) between 6 to 10 conferences. More than a tenth of the participating organisations (11.5%) organise from 11 to 30 conferences, 5.7% organise from 31 to 50, and a tenth (10.7%) of them organise more than 50. For 4.1% of respondents we were unable to obtain this information.

Factor Analysis Results

Considering that a similar multidimensional attribute model for the attractiveness of the congress destination with three groups of factors has not yet been constructed, it was necessary to form a set of statements related to each group of attributes for the purpose of this research. We thus classified the statements into three groups. Due to the complexity of the studied problem, we decided to perform a separate factor analysis for each group. The statements were checked the same way in each group: with a Likert-type scale,

where the respondents rated agreement with each statement, where a score of 1 meant they 'completely disagree,' a score of 2 meant they 'disagree,' a score of 3 meant they 'partially agree,' a score of 4 meant they 'agree' and a score of 5 meant they 'strongly agree.' We deliberately formed some statements with a negative meaning. In this case, we reversed the rating scale so that the higher value was always associated with a stronger agreement with the importance of the item being evaluated. We marked such elements with (R).

Destination Attractiveness Attributes

In the final model 13 of the original 19 statements were used. The adequacy of variable inclusion in the final factor model was verified by KMO statistics; its value amounted to 0.74, which indicates the median suitability of the data (KMO > 0.7) for further factor analysis. The adequacy of the data to obtain the final factor solution is further confirmed by Bartlett's test of sphericity (p = 0.0). The eigenvalue diagram showed one more prominent factor and three slightly less prominent ones. The results therefore show that the opinions of the surveyed suppliers regarding the attractiveness attributes of the destination can be explained by four common factors, all of which together account for 53.3% of the total variance explained, which is an acceptable value. To obtain a clearer structure of the final solution, we carried out a rotation using the varimax method. The final factor solution is shown in Table 4. To achieve better clarity, only those factor loadings that show a significant impact are shown (<–0.3 or >0.3). We added the calculated proportion of the total variance explained to the structure of factor loadings, as well as Cronbach's coefficient of reliability of an individual factor, which ranges between 0.74 and 0.77 in the case of three factors, which is considered very good, whereas for the fourth, 0.83 indicates exemplary reliability.

The results of the factor analysis showed that a total of four factors can determine attractiveness. According to the respondents, these are the factors that are important in choosing a host destination for the organisation of the conference, and thus for attracting potential visitors to the destination. According to the suppliers, the evaluation of the attractiveness of the destination as the place where the conference is organised refers to the reputation of the place, the attractions of the destination, its accessibility and leisure activities available at the destination.

The first factor is the one that explains the largest proportion of the total variance, namely 16.2%. According to the content of individual variables, which stand for the general characteristics of the place where the conference is organised, we named this factor *reputation.* It is most strongly defined by the destination security variable, followed by the attitude of the locals towards the conference guests and the development of local infrastructure. According to the suppliers, the reputation of the destination is also indicated by the good opinion of the professional public about the destination, which facilitates the decision to organise the conference at the destination itself, and is also a result of a stimulating economic environment.

The second factor was associated with *attractions,* and it accounts for 12.9% of the total variance. It is determined by the culinary selection of the destination, the sights at the destination and the favorable climatic conditions.

The third factor, which accounts for 12.2% of the total variability, is the factor related to the *accessibility* of the destination, in which case its attractiveness is reduced by a great distance from the original destination, which is usually associated with high transportation costs to the host destination. Last but not least, a destination may be less accessible and thus, according to the service providers, also less attractive due to the time-consuming arrangement of formalities to enter the country.

The fourth factor is associated with *leisure activities* at the destination, which accounts for 12% of the total variance. The result is almost somewhat surprising, as organisers have not paid much attention to 'non-congress' activities so far. It is true, however, that such activities are becoming increasingly more attractive for the organisation of the conference at the destination.

Venue Attractiveness Attributes

The final factor solution retained ten variables out of a total of 22 originally included. The KMO statistic value

Table 4 Rotated Factor Solution: Destination Attributes

Item (variable)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
When organising a conference, it is better if a destination is considered safe.	0.71			
It is better to have locals with a positive attitude towards guests (they are hospitable, kind, fluent in foreign languages) when organising a conference.	0.74			
When organising a conference, it is better if a destination has a well-developed local infrastructure.	0.67			
If the professional public (journals, online journals, professional associations, social networks) has a positive opinion about a destination, the decision for organising a conference is faster, easier.	0.50			
It is important that the economic environment of a destination is encouraging.	0.34			
It is important that a destination has a well-developed culinary offer.		0.80		
When deciding to organise a conference, it is important for a destination to offer tourist sites and attractions.		0.72		
Favourable climate/weather conditions at a destination facilitate opting for the organisation of a conference.		0.51		
Remoteness of a destination makes it less attractive for organising a conference there.			0.79	
High transport costs make a destination less attractive for organising a conference there.			0.66	
Time-consuming arrangement of formalities when entering a country (obtaining visas, procedures at crossing borders) makes a destination less attractive for organising a conference there.			0.60	
When deciding whether to organise a conference, it is irrelevant whether a destination offers good possibilities for shopping.				0.86
When deciding whether to organise a conference, it is irrelevant whether a destination offers a variety of leisure activities (night clubs, bars, theatres, . . .).				0.79
Total variance explained (%)	16.18	12.92	12.19	12.03
Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's alpha)	0.77	0.75	0.74	0.83

Notes Factors: (1) reputation, (2) attractions, (3) accessibility, (4) leisure activities.

amounts to 0.81, which means it is estimated as suitable to be included in the model. The adequacy of the data to obtain the final factor solution is further proven by Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p = 0.0$). In estimating the proportion of total variance explained, we found that a total of three factors account for 44.4% of the total variability in the sample. The final factor solution was formulated by three common factors and is presented in Table 5. To achieve better clarity, only those factor loadings that show a significant impact are shown (<–0.3 or >0.3). The calculated proportion of the total variance explained and the Cronbach's alpha were added to the structure of factor loadings for each individual factor. This amounts to 0.70 for the first one, which can be estimated as good reliability, whereas for the other two factors, the value is 0.66 for the second and 0.67 for the third factor, which can be estimated as moderate reliability (Nunally, 1978).

The first factor, which accounts for 18.1% of the variability in the sample, is the organisation of the venue, which can be associated with the professional work of the staff at the venue, as well as the efficiency of the registration process and the speed of entry or exit from the venue, and last but not least, the adequate arrangement of conference facilities, such as their clear labelling. Ensuring security is also one of the parameters of the organisation of the venue.

The share of the total variance explained for the

Table 5 Rotated Factor Solution: Venue Attributes

Item (variable)	(1)	(2)	(3)
It is expected of the staff at the venue to be professional.	0.79		
It is expected that a venue offers a possibility to organise an effective registration process and a fast entrance to/exit from the venue.	0.78		
A pleasant atmosphere at a venue is not important.			0.83
It is not important that a venue offers additional services, for example the possibility to use their offices, wardrobes, carrying as well as storing of materials and similar.			0.57
When organising a conference, it is important to have an appropriate number of hotel rooms (rooms for accommodation) with respect to the size of the conference.		0.64	
It is important that a venue offers good connections for local transport.		0.57	
It is better if accommodation is as close as possible to the conference venue (facilities in which the conference takes place).		0.41	
The size and number of halls have to be appropriate for the size of a conference (the number of attendees).		0.42	
Conference facilities at a venue must be appropriately organised (markings, interior design, toilet facilities).	0.36		
Safety at a venue is important.	0.44		
Total variance explained (%)	18.13	13.79	12.44
Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's alpha)	0.70	0.66	0.67

Notes Factors: (1) organisation, (2) infrastructure, (3) additional services.

second factor amounts to 13.8%, and is associated with the infrastructural arrangement of the venue. It is defined by variables relating to conference facilities as such on the one hand, and to accommodation on the other. Conference facilities at the venue should have an appropriate ratio between the size and number of halls and the volume of the conference, which undoubtedly facilitates its organisation. The results also show that the infrastructure arrangement of the venue is determined by its distance to local connections. It is not surprising that accommodation can be linked to the venue, as we established both in theory and in practice that the venue and accommodation are often linked together in a meaningful whole. The characteristics of the individual variables that are linked within the factor of infrastructure lead us to think that these are the characteristics of the venue that facilitate the organisation of the conference.

A somewhat smaller proportion of the total variance explained (12.4%) is associated with the third factor, which is related to additional venue services. It refers to elements that facilitate the organisation of the conference and include those venue services that typically represent the 'invisible' hand of the organisation. In fact, the results show that this refers to a pleasant atmosphere created by the venue and a variable that reflects the technical nature of the organisation, such as the possibility to use an office, changing rooms, and material storage facilities.

Conference Attractiveness Attributes

After a substantive analysis, we decided to include 12 variables in the final solution. The relevance of inclusion is confirmed by KMO statistics, amounting to 0.793, and Bartlett's test of sphericity (p = 0.00). The assessment of the total variance explained and the eigenvalue of the individual factors showed that the attractiveness of the conference can be explained by four factors, their total variance being 58.2%. The final factor solution after rotation is shown in Table 6. The calculation of the reliability coefficient indicates exemplary reliability in the opportunity factor (0.83),

whereas the reliability in the reputation and networking factors is very good (0.79 and 0.78 respectively). In terms of the content factor, the Cronbach's coefficient in the amount of 0.60 is at the border of moderate reliability.

The factor loadings matrix shows that the first factor is defined by four variables. This is related to conference opportunities and accounts for 18.5% of variability in the sample. From the organisers' point of view, the opportunity factor should be understood primarily as creating an opportunity for the attendee, and thus fulfilling the basic mission of the conference, which is primarily meant to be a place for business meetings between individuals. From a service provider's perspective, conference opportunities are those that allow for the exchange of experience, the search for new opportunities and contacts, and the acquisition of knowledge, and ultimately an opportunity to meet experts.

The second factor, accounting for 15.2% of the total variance explained, was the factor associated with the reputation of the conference, which is determined by exactly the same variables as we had anticipated in the design phase of the survey. Reputation is a conference factor that relates to the opinion of the external public. This is the opinion that former attendees and the professional public have of the conference, and positive past experiences of the attendees with the conference, which should contribute to the efforts of suppliers to optimize the organisation of the conference, which can lead to better opportunities in conference selection and attendance.

The third factor, which accounts for 13.2% of sample variability, is associated with networking. It is linked with opportunities to find new business partners and meet existing ones.

The fourth factor of conference attractiveness is associated with conference content, and accounts for 11.3% of the variability in the sample. According to the suppliers, the content of the conference is most determined by interesting contributions or content appearing in the conference program, especially if they represent something original in comparison to previous conferences, and by the presence of prominent speakers at the conference.

Findings and Discussion

Our starting hypothesis is based on the realization that visiting a congress destination is possible due to the existence of attractiveness of the congress destination, which is not a unique construct, but is defined by three groups of attractiveness attributes that arise from the necessity for the existence of three fundamental components of a congress destination: attractiveness of the destination as a place, attractiveness of the venue and attractiveness of the conference. We examined it using the results of exploratory factor analysis by individual groups of attractiveness of a congress destination. The summary of results is shown in Table 7.

The results show that destination attractiveness is determined by the reputation of the destination, the attractions at the destination, accessibility to the destination and leisure activities at the destination, characterized by 13 variables. Cronbach's coefficient values for these factors express very good or exemplary reliability, as they range between 0.74 and 0.83, indicating that individual dimensions of destination attractiveness on the service provider's end define the construct appropriately.

According to the results of the analysis, the attractiveness of the venue is linked with the organisation of the venue, the infrastructure and the additional services of the venue, characterised by a total of 10 variables. Considering the values of the reliability coefficient, which ranges from 0.66 to 0.70, we can summarise that they indicate appropriate result characteristics, meaning the individual dimensions of venue attractiveness on the part of the providers define the measured construct with adequate reliability.

The analysis has shown that conference attractiveness can be defined by a total of four factors, including conference opportunities, the reputation of the conference, networking and the substantive aspect of the conference, which is described by 12 variables. Cronbach's coefficient values for each individual factor range between 0.83 and 0.60, which indicates a good reliability of the conference attractiveness construct.

The results of exploratory factor analysis are only partially in line with the anticipated theoretical concepts, as it was set out at the beginning of the study that the attractiveness of a destination would consist

Table 6 Rotated Factor Solution: Conference Attributes

Item (variable)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for participants to share experience.	0.77			
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for seeking new possibilities (markets, research, companies, cooperations etc.) and contacts.	0.82			
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for participants to obtain new knowledge.	0.66			
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for participants to meet specialists within their field.	0.49			
It is important for organisation that past participants have a positive opinion about a conference.		0.89		
It is important for organisation that the professional public (journals, online journals, professional associations, social networks) has a positive opinion about a conference.		0.70		
If participants have had a good experience with a conference, it is easier for them to decide to attend it.		0.52		
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for participants to search for new business partners.			0.78	
Attending a conference is a great opportunity for participants to meet business partners.			0.70	
If the programme, content of a conference represents a novelty with regard to the previous ones, it is easier/faster to get participants to attend a conference.				0.41
Interesting contributions (topics) in the programme increase the number of participants at a conference.				0.70
The presence of respectable speakers inside a field increases the number of participants at a conference.				0.58
Total variance explained (%)	18.46	15.19	13.18	11.32
Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's alpha)	0.83	0.79	0.78	0.60

Notes Factors: (1) opportunity, (2) reputation, (3) networking, (4) content.

of four factors (accessibility, attraction, services and conditions at the destination, reputation of the destination) and five factors of venue attractiveness (accessibility, accommodation, special conference facilities, venue services, accommodation and reputation) and conference attractiveness (business opportunities, networking, intervening opportunities, content and reputation). The research shows that attractiveness factors are shaped differently by individual attractiveness groups. We identified a total of 11 attractiveness dimensions, which are described by a total of 34 elements, and are classified within three groups of attractiveness.

The results of exploratory factor analysis conducted between suppliers and meeting planners undoubtedly indicate the multidimensionality of the congress destination attractiveness construct, defined by destination attractiveness, venue attractiveness, and conference attractiveness, as it turned out that there are a total of 11 dimensions defining it. These are the factors that are important in choosing a congress destination, and thus for attracting potential visitors to the destination. The results also indicate that it would be difficult to separately consider the different items of attractiveness of a congress destination as a factor in visiting, and they should therefore be considered as a comprehensive concept, which, given their multidimensional nature, dictates the simultaneous consideration of all aspects of attractiveness.

Based on the results of the analysis, our thesis can be confirmed, as it turned out that it is possible to determine 11 attractiveness dimensions within individ-

Table 7 Summary of Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis by Individual Dimensions

Category	Item	α	Dimension
Destination	Reputation	0.77	Safety of the destination
			Positive attitude of locals
			Well-developed local infrastructure
			A positive opinion of the professional public
			Encouraging economic environment
	Attractions	0.75	Well-developed culinary offer
			Offering tourist sites and attractions
			Favourable climate/weather conditions
	Accessibility	0.74	Remoteness of a destination
			High transport costs
			Time-consuming arrangement of formalities
	Leisure activities	0.83	Shopping
			A variety of leisure activities
Venue	Organisation	0.70	Professional venue staff
			Effective registration process
			Appropriately organised conference facilities
			Safety at a venue
	Infrastructure	0.66	Good connections with local transport
			Appropriateness of the size and number of halls
			Vicinity of accommodation
			Appropriate number of hotel rooms with respect to the size of the conf.
	Additional services	0.67	Pleasant atmosphere
			Technical services

Continued on the next page

ual congress destination attractiveness groups, which points to the multidimensionality of the congress destination attractiveness construct.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the multidimensionality of addressing the attractiveness of a congress destination, and points out the need to address it in a comprehensive manner and, ultimately, to interpret the attractiveness of a congress destination as a factor in visiting. It was established that it would be difficult to address individual attributes of attractiveness separately or as an individual entity, but must be viewed in the light of complementarity that gives the items of attractiveness of a congress destination a multidimensional character. The congress destination thus cannot be understood as an individual entity, but as a managerial and organisational compound of different stakeholder groups, which nevertheless want to accomplish a common goal: to hold the conference as its core product, taking into account the attributes of attractiveness that determine both the conference and the venue where it takes place, and considering the attributes of attractiveness of the destination acting as the host location for the conference.

The novelty of the research lies in the changed, more comprehensive view of the attractiveness of the congress destination, which arises from the three con-

Table 7 Continued from the previous page

Category	Item	α	Dimension
Conference	Opportunities	0.83	Sharing experiences
			Seeking new possibilities
			Obtaining new knowledge
			Meeting specialists within the professional field
	Reputation	0.79	Positive opinion of past participants
			Positive opinion of professional public
			Good past experiencies
	Networking	0.78	Searching for new business partners
			Meeting existing business partners
	Content	0.60	Novelty of the content
			Interesting topics
			The presence of respectable speakers

ceptual cores or ingredients required in organising the conference: the attractiveness of the destination as a host destination, the attractiveness of the venue as the location where the conference is held, and the attractiveness of the conference as the core product. The research is based on the thinking of Whitfield et al. (2014), who argue that the attractiveness of a congress destination should be considered in the context of three different, but interacting levels. This way, through the construction of a new model and with a newly designed measuring instrument, we tested and confirmed the multidimensionality of addressing the attractiveness of a congress destination.

The restriction of the research is certainly the fact that it was conducted on the territory of Slovenia and on the sample of the association segment, so we were limited to the Slovenian market of association conferences. By expanding the research into a region, such as Southeastern Europe as an important congress destination, we could get a different view of the researched case. Due to the complexity of the model tested, another restriction was that the research does not include members of international congress committees that decide on the destination at transnational level, as highlighted by Crouch et al. (2019).

It is, however, definitely a contribution to addressing the attractiveness of a congress destination with a changed view of the things that make it attractive, which requires the construction of a new model, measuring instrument, and its verification. In addition to designing a new, multidimensional construct of attractiveness of a congress destination, our view of understanding the offer on the congress market as a sample on which we tested the model, has also changed. Based on the model first developed by Oppermann and Chon (1997), which is also supported by the recommendations of UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016), we also included suppliers as well as meeting planners. These two groups are in fact the ones which organise the conference with the aim of attracting as many attendees as possible, as Var et al. (1985) were among the first to point out.

The research possibilities are presented in the following parts of the paper using a developed measuring instrument on the example of individual congress destinations, and on the example of conference and business meeting types. This would make it possible to also gain insight into the special preferences leading to the choice of a congress destination for different, specific segments of congress participants within the association market that our research was aimed at, and to confront them with the guidelines that organisers and suppliers follow when organising business meetings. In the light of determining the attractiveness of

a congress destination in a multidimensional model, it would also be reasonable to explore the specifics of smaller destinations.

Finally, the proposed construct of congress destination attractiveness could be applied to other types of events as well, because, as Getz and Page (2016) explain it, business events are one of the specific types of planned events in addition to sport events, festivals and other cultural events, and entertainment events. By appropriately modifying the measuring instrument, the existing construct would thus be tested on other types of events and at different destinations, which would contribute to a broader understanding of the attractiveness of different types of events.

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Integration of Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Innovation in Tourism: The QCII Model

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This article focuses on the search for intersections of quality management, continuous improvement systems, and innovation in the field of tourism. It contains introductory theoretical insights in all three areas and (in the research section) considers professional media to find validation for theoretical starting points and further development guidelines, additionally obtained through examples of good practices and their following of key trends. Through connections between theories and practical examples, the basis for the links between sustainability, quality, improvements, and innovation in tourism are introduced, followed by the resulting QCII model for improving and innovating quality tourism offerings at the destination. The suggested model should be (spontaneously or through careful planning) evolved to follow the concepts of smart tourism, both in terms of new technologies and their balanced deployment, and in terms of the harmonisation of interests and connections between all components of the destination system.

Keywords: quality, continuous improvement, innovation, smart tourism

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Introduction

The answers to this paper's questions (where does the boundary lie between quality and innovation in tourism and what is the related role of promoting continuous improvement?) are dealt with at three levels: through a theoretical overview, a case analysis, and the proposal for the synthesis of findings in the form of a model. The model suggests the roles of the tourist system's stakeholders in improving and innovating tourism processes and offerings. In the theoretical part, the areas of innovation, internal and external aspects of quality, and related continuous improvement concepts are discussed.

In the analytical work, examples from practice acquired in professional media were used: the case of stimulating innovation in Slovenia at the national level and in a large Slovenian tourist company; an example of quality management in one of the largest international hotel corporations; a set of tools for internal promotion of continuous improvement in the organisation; and various approaches for external transparency and the involvement of stakeholders outside the organisation in its processes of improvement and innovation. The findings are summarised in three schematic diagrams: one of the links between innovation, quality and sustainability, one of the links between quality, innovation, and continuous improvement, and a model for introducing these concepts into a tourist destination. The links in the diagram and the model are based on trends and values, streamlined in the concept of smart tourism: a term that carries a double meaning related to smart technologies and their smart usage.

Theory

In a review of the various research stages of service innovation, Coombs and Miles (2000) mention the stage of synthesis in which it is possible to develop an inno-

vation categorisation model that would be suitable for all economic sectors, including tourism. To achieve this stage, the authors reduce the influence of the classical technological approach on measuring innovation, supported by (Camisón & Monfort-Mir, 2012), which argue that there are hidden and unexplored fields (also) in the field of innovation in tourism. The key field for them is innovation through *organisational learning* based on internal (embodied) and external (disembodied) knowledge. The former type of knowledge is the acquired experiences, skills, and technologies that are owned by the company, while the latter are various external sources for acquiring knowledge. With the help of both types, tourist companies improve and innovate their intangible (and difficult-to-quantify) services that they offer on the market and which address key added value(s) for their customers.

There are many different approaches to measurement and more or less complex categorisations of innovation in tourism (Camisón & Monfort-Mir, 2012; Pikkemaat & Peters, 2005; Bieger & Weinert, 2006; Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2010). Although, the *two-core innovation model* approaches the issue with only two dimensions (Daft, 1978; OECD, 2005; Camisón & Monfort-Mir, 2012), the model focuses on two key operational areas of each company: the technological core (technical part) and the administrative core (social part). The technological/technical focus is usually divided by the development of new product- and process-related factors (Abernathy & Utterback, 1978) and the analysis of the degree of innovation introduced at the incremental-radical interval (Abernathy & Clark, 1985; Damanpour, 1991; Hjalager, 2002). In the social/management field, the focus is on innovations that change the social structure of the company, meaning changes of interactions with the internal and external environment (Damanpour et al., 2009).

Another partly related approach to describing innovation analyses the form of innovation and its impact on the system to which it belongs (Hall & Williams, 2008). The form of innovation describes its composition, and the impact describes the degree of influence of innovation on a global, national, regional, or sectoral level (Hall & Williams, 2008) or, according to the Oslo Manual definition, at the company level (OECD, 2005). The described two-dimensional approaches (Križaj et al., 2014) can be summarised into two groups: content and appearance. The characteristics of *content* define the type of innovation: product, process, organisational, marketing and other related ways of describing the form of innovation. Features such as the incremental or radical level of innovation and the degree of impact define their *appearance.*

The 'content' of innovation is described by different categorisation schemes. The 'appearance' of innovation is divided into its appearance within the company (as it was perceived within innovation and what has changed within its boundaries) and outside the company (how innovation has been perceived by customers, suppliers and competitors, and what has changed for this reason). In the field of project management and quality management, a similar role is played by efficiency and effectiveness (Sundqvist et al., 2014), the first in terms of finding optimal internal configuration, i.e., the 'content' of the object of observation, and the second in terms of its ability, external 'appearance.' The *quality domain* focuses on a similar internal and external view of the (still) non-optimal objects, analyses diverse related human activities and looks for ways to better implement them and improve their results.

One of the fundamental approaches that attempt to identify key quality areas is the *gaps approach* (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Kandampully, 2007; Uran, 2010). The proposed service quality model identifies its key dimensions, its measurement, and the reasons for the problems in achieving quality. It focuses on external aspects (customer expectations, perception and experience of service) as well as internal ones (the operation of devices and employees, their level of knowledge and skills, and their ability to manage, implement, respond and communicate).

In tourism, service quality is a basic element of tourism productivity (Sainaghi et al., 2017). The most critical role in tourism is played by employees who, during interactions with customers, have a decisive influence on the level of service quality, customer satisfaction, their loyalty and, consequently, the performance of the company (Schneider et al., 2005; Uran Maravić, 2016). For the implementation of high qual-

ity and recognisable services, tourism companies must recognise their competitive advantages and key competences that need to be constantly upgraded (Ţîţu et al., 2016). In addition to the internal analysis, it is essential to analyse customer satisfaction and other factors in the environment in which the company operates (Tasci, 2016). In the aforementioned 'content/appearance' relation, therefore, we can also refer to the 'content' of activities in the field of quality in tourism, with which we ensure such (higher) quality, as well as *internal and external* 'aspects' of such efforts.

Internal Aspects of Quality

The internal aspects of service quality and gaps between them are systematically addressed by the abovementioned model (Parasuraman et al., 1985) and its later versions, which are discussed in later sections. Prior to this, in the field of internal aspects of quality, we should mention the concept of *continuous improvement process* (CIP). One of the early works in this field (Deming, 2000), published for the first time in 1982, places the process of constant improvement in the core activity of each organisation, where the feedback obtained from its processes and from its customers is compared with the goals of the organisation and further development steps are defined according to that. As part of the management and improvement of organisational systems, the concept of 'Business Process Management' (BPM) is also used (Ko, 2009), in which the emphasis is on tracking the hierarchy of processes that bring added value rather than the social hierarchy of the organisation itself.

BPM and similar quality management systems focus on business process analysis, identification, and measurement of their key performance indicators, and measures for continuous improvement and innovation. In such activities, which are derived primarily from conventional manufacturing companies, there is a danger of too much focus on exclusive processes and technology and their structuring, standardisation, and automation; especially when there is an increasing number of creative, personalised, and complex service processes involved (Brocke et al., 2016). It is important to focus on the context of each such process (Brocke et al., 2016) and to the appropriate choice of approaches to achieve the desired quality of the offered products and services, and outwardly invisible business processes as well (Sujová & Marcineková, 2015). It is all about the quality of the goods sold and the appropriate level of quality of all direct and indirect processes that take place in the company and which reach beyond the classical (standardised) quality assurance, as they are directed towards an all-encompassing balanced and sustainable operation (Broman & Robèrt, 2017).

These guidelines are also being followed by newer versions of the already well-established approaches to quality management and continuous improvement: Just in Time, Total Quality Management, Kaizen, Lean Manufacturing, Business Process Reengineering, Six Sigma among others (Delgado et al., 2014). In addition to measuring the in-house characteristics of the processes themselves and collecting suggestions for employee improvements, these approaches are also more or less actively focusing on the opinions of their customers. One such example is a business process management system based on the methodical processing of user feedback, the so-called Voice of the Customer (Pyon et al., 2011), which is a quantitative and qualitative marketing tool for the systematic and in-depth collection of feedback from customers about expectations, desirable and unwanted characteristics, experiences and feelings related to the 'content' of the offer and the 'appearance' of the company. Feedback is organised within a system in a hierarchical structure, in line with the strategic priorities of the company. The processed information serves as a basis for all decisions on the further development and improvement of internal processes. It is especially important that members of the development department and production staff be included throughout the process, from the collection of feedback and their processing onward; that is, internal and not only external marketing staff has to be included in the whole process (Pyon et al., 2011).

External Aspects of Quality

With the last example of the approach to internal planning of business process improvements, we have switched to another, external quality perspective: the perspective of the users of the business processes' re-

sults. Users opt for the services of the company if they see value in them, whereas the value is difficult to understand with a uniquely manageable concept in a globalised and fragmented offer, as well as in the abundance of increasingly diverse lifestyles (Tasci, 2016). The usual variables that companies with which want to master value include customers' opinions about quality, satisfaction, trust, and price compliance. All of these variables affect the first and continuing visits of the tourist company and the tourist destination in which the company is located; this is so before (Kim et al., 2011), during, and after the buying decision (Han & Hyun, 2015).

As in all other service sectors, quality in tourism also has two main dimensions, the quality of the service process, and the quality level of the provided service itself, that is, the final market goods bought by the tourist, experienced and compared with pre-purchase expectations (Butnaru et al., 2014). All this is measured using various *methodological approaches* (SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, SICTQUAL, GIQET, etc.), which are used in various service sectors: health, education, banking, telecommunications, sales, transport, delivery (Butnaru et al., 2014; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990; Cid-López et al., 2015; Saraei & Amini, 2012). The main variables that are measured by SERQUAL's most established methodological approach are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

With the emergence of ubiquitous *information technologies,* not only the processes and businesses themselves changed but also the cultural habits and value systems of (potential) customers. New channels for tourism companies and new channels for the flow of quality information are thus opened (Berne et al., 2012). Such new channels allow new ways of selecting and purchasing tourist services, enabling new approaches to the marketing and creating of new types of demand. Therefore, Pearce (2008) suggests that old and new sales channels are to be intertwined and used as a network of opportunities that, in new ways, measures, defines, and targets customer values and thus also affects perception and upgraded understanding of quality.

One of the approaches to this is *smart tourism* (Wang et al., 2016), based on the conceptual foundations of smart cities (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015) and the data networks used in them together with mobile technologies, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things. Perhaps such intensive integration of information technologies currently looks just like an overly pushy principle of sales promotion, but as Buhalis and Law (2008) pointed out some ten years ago, more demanding tourists want to organise travel (at least in part) by themselves, are more impatient and informed, intensively compare the prices of competitive offerings, communicate more intensively with each other, share negative and positive opinions in publicly accessible online places, and also want instant access to any information, even during the trip. All this requires smarter tourism, smarter supply, and a smarter approach to ensure the adequate quality of basic tourist services and the quality of many new details that tourists require on the wave of current information technology development and other trends.

A vital new aspect of quality is, for example, *information quality* and its impact on user satisfaction (Ghasemaghaei & Hassanein, 2015), which is still being mostly discussed in theory and less in practice (Ghasemaghaei & Hassanein, 2016). However, already very present and influential is electronic word of mouth (eWOM) whose three main areas of influence (the content of such messages, the consequence of consumer behaviour, and the impact of published reviews on the performance of companies (Kim & Canina, 2015) are already well researched both at the level of companies and destinations, and different tourist segments (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). Still, more and more ingenious users and ever-smarter technologies draw a thin line between when eWOM is controlled by tourism companies, and when eWOM is controlling them (Litvin et al., 2008).

Innovation

The answer to the management of diverse (yet) unmanageable situations lies in innovation: the search for new and better solutions, which bring added value to the one who introduces or accepts these innovations (Rogers, 2003). The basic aspects of innovation and its

two-dimensional *content/appearance* scopes were presented at the beginning of this paper. On the one hand, we are therefore questioning what and how we are introducing, and on the other, what the appearance of that which was introduced through all the effects and added values brought about by the innovation is. In tourism, the key issue (in addition to the company's existence and well-being) is how to effectively target the values and needs of customers, i.e., tourists, through the offerings of the company. These tourists are increasingly involved in or co-create tourist products that are purchased from tourism and tourism-related companies (Malone et al., 2017). The term 'increasingly involved' targets the findings from the section on smart tourism, that is, the new, even more fragmented conditions in which an individual tourist company operates, forming one of the pieces of the tourist mosaic at the destination (Chapman & Light, 2016; Zach & Hill, 2017).

The concept of public-private innovation networks and services (PPINS) (Djellal & Gallouj, 2013) confirms that the mosaic paradigm is not just a phenomenon that we find in tourism. As in other economic sectors, there is the same global and technological pressure that encourages individual economic and non-economic entities to connect to larger innovation networks. The principle of such networks has been known for a long time (Powell et al., 1996), but PPINS point to the growing phenomenon of non-technological innovations and to the changing paradigm that innovation is exclusively an in-house high-tech process in which the public sphere has no role to play. This change was indicated by the *democratisation of innovation* (Hippel, 2005) and *open innovation* (Chesbrough, 2003), although the openness of the innovation field is even more strongly reflected in the aforementioned smart cities and in the increasingly ever-present principle of the sharing economy (Acquier et al., 2017).

After the transition from a closed high-tech innovation paradigm to the openness of the innovation process, the innovation intermediaries were the first to take care of the flow of knowledge and resources among the involved companies in controlled innovation networks (Gómez et al., 2016). With the increasing transition to online environments, *open innovation platforms* (OIP) have also emerged enabling searching for the missing parts (employees, knowledge, partners, etc.) of the innovation process, and fostering partnerships and finding the necessary professionals. By opening platforms for the general public and end-users, there were opportunities for free trading with development solutions, organising development challenges, voting for the best solutions, among others. The main reasons for active participation in such platforms, as providers of knowledge and solutions, are earnings and reputation (Abbate & Souca, 2013) or the mutual interest of companies and customers in seeking better user solutions and their marketing (Sigala, 2012). By actively participating in such ecosystems, as with the sharing economy, a loop between providers and consumers is tightly closed. The boundary between one and the other is blurred, which does not mean that chaos has arisen and we do not know who drinks and who pays, but this is a clear message that tourism providers must also 'open and democratise' in innovation.

One of the ways of opening up innovation processes is to *find cross-sections* between quality management, continuous improvement processes, and innovation. In their study, Kim et al. (2012) confirm that the introduction of quality management methods positively correlates with the introduction of all the main categories of innovation. Similarly, a positive correlation between employee performance, innovation and quality management has been revealed by the work of Sadikoglu and Zehir (2010) and Terziovski and Guerrero (2014). More detailed analysis of the links between innovation and various 'hard and soft' quality management approaches (statistical analysis of process variables, human capital management, focus on customer needs) also confirmed the positive impact on the degree of business innovation (Zeng et al., 2015). An example of the development of a system that promotes the spreading of the general innovation culture of the company by encouraging continuous improvement has been described by Ross (2016). Through analysing a few case studies in the fields of tourism, quality, and innovation, this article also deals with this kind of opening and connecting approaches.

Case Studies

Based on the presented theory, the analysis of selected cases is presented, which in the field of tourism indicate partial links between quality, continuous improvement processes, and innovation. Examples are selected in four areas. The first part deals with examples of promoting tourism innovations and improvements in the local, national environment. The second one deals with the situation in one of the largest tourist global corporations. Then, a group of ICT tools to stimulate the improvements in implementation and the developmental involvement of entire organisations is presented. The final part of the case analysis continues with the transparency of production and development processes both inside and outside the organisation.

Since 2004, the Slovenian Tourist Board, in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, and the University of Primorska's Faculty of Tourism Studies Turistica, has been systematically promoting the innovation of Slovenian tourism through the Sower and Creator Awards and the Bank of Tourism Potentials (BTPS) platform, for which they have received several international acknowledgements (UN WTO, OECD, EU). Sower and Creator are annual awards for realised tourism products and still unrealised tourist ideas. The BTPS is a tourism innovation platform, on which information about tourism trends and ideas is published, and their authors and potential investors can connect in order to realise their ideas (Križaj & Zakonjšek, 2011). The most remarkable example of these activities is the creation of a new niche tourist agency for sustainable tourism; the co-investor found the idea of the agency and contacted the author through the BTPS.[1]

Sava TMC, a part of Slovenia's largest chain of hotels and spa resorts Sava Hotels & Resorts, applied for the 2011 Sower Award, with their Network of Innovation (Sava TMC, 2011). In a similar way, as suggested in the theoretical part of this paper by Berne et al. (2012), they have recognised the interconnection of new information channels that can also be exploited in tourism for both conventional production activities and the quality management with continuous improvements process. The latter was addressed by Sava TMC, which managed the network through three subsystems for (1) promoting and capturing innovation proposals, (2) effective handling of innovation proposals, and (3) implementing innovation proposals and measuring impacts. The size of the organisational team shows their large-scale approach: six representatives of the management, six representatives of the dislocated companies, a joint innovation coordinator and two representatives of support processes (personnel, information support). According to their application documentation (Berne et al., 2012), the number of improvements proposals increased from 29 to 1,471 in two years. At the time of the application preparation, over 900 innovations were proposed in their company in the first quarter of 2011, of which more than half were accepted for immediate introduction. The number of proposals per employee increased from 0.02 to 1.22 proposals per employee. According to their internal estimates, the effect of the innovations introduced before and after the introduction of the system rose from €6,000 to almost half a million euros a year.

A similar, global example is related to Starwood Hotels, one of the largest hotel networks with over 30 leading service brands and over 5,700 locations. On the blog of a provider of an application development platform (Quick Base, 2016), an interview was published with the administrator of the Six Sigma Starwood Hotels programme for North America. After deciding that his group would become responsible for operational innovation, the interviewed administrator's team was caught in a trap by running long lists of what was being improved, but not what has actually been accepted into the daily business from these lists. They found that they undertook too many projects at the same time, but did not devote enough attention and time to the people in the organisational structure of their companies to become accustomed to and adopt all the innovations. As a result, the number of projects decreased, and an analysis of the behaviour and reactions of employees to the innovations was introduced (Rogers, 2003), which set the admin-

[1] Information about this example was obtained during the interview between the author of the article and the author of the niche sustainable tourism agency idea.

istrator's project in the right direction. In addition to pointing to meaningful and contextual (Brocke et al., 2016) work with information related to the introduction of innovations, the interview emphasises the importance of project sponsors (Sense, 2013) who, in addition to project managers in charge of introducing improvements and innovations, check and influence the proper climate in all key departments and the hierarchical levels of the company to which the innovation is being introduced.

The third area in the Quick Base interview, related to the change management and the ever-smarter technologies (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015), was the Citizen Development concept. The concept serves as an approach to the production of software according to the 'Lego' principle, in which the in-depth knowledge of computer programming languages is not important, because the new internal/business or external/user applications are created with pre-prepared software modules. The approach is particularly interesting for smaller (tourist) providers who do not have such complex internal structures as large corporations (Bloomberg, 2016), although also the Starwood Hotels Six Sigma administrator believes that such tools can contribute to a more agile daily deployment of process improvements, as they reduce dependence on internal or external professional computer programmers.

Quick Base itself offers a tool based on the Citizen Development concept (see http://www.quickbase.com/about-us). It is primarily aimed at managing business processes, automating them, capturing data, and generating analytical reports on the operation of business systems. More specifically, it is focused on quality and, like the presented example of the Sava Innovation Network are ICT tools, is represented by KaiNexus (Kutscher, 2016). They are based on one of the continuous improvement approaches (Kaizen in the case of KaiNexus) and allow employees throughout the organisation to participate in the exchange of ideas to reduce costs, increase sales, or increase user satisfaction. These are web and mobile platforms, which, through various methods, stimulate the active participation of all employees in the business system. According to KaiNexus, 3 % of submitted proposals are implemented in systems with a classic physical suggestion mailbox and, for their system, they claim that 80 % of the proposed improvements are introduced (Kutscher, 2016). There are many versions of this kind of tools available online for 'each-and-every' employee integration in the analysis of performance and operational quality, and continuous improvements process (Hyphen, Treehive, Vibecatch, Teamphoria, etc.); one of their main features is to increase the transparency of operation and cooperation within the organisation (Piccolo et al., 2015).

An additional step forward is *external transparency* (Heimstädt, 2017), in which the clients also obtain insight into the operation of the company. Usually, such systems are predominantly based on eWOM, for which the goal is not so much to inspect the quality of service process as to look at the quality of the service (Butnaru et al., 2014). However, with available online platforms strongly equipped with customer review functionality, such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Yelp, ever-resourceful tourists are gaining an ever greater insight into not only what they are or will buy, but also what the company is doing 'behind the curtains.' One example of a 'wide-open curtain' is shown in the article on a carpenter's workshop from Buenos Aires, which was promoted on several crowdfunding platforms, transmitting live work processes of the crowdfunded products in the workshop (Peters, 2016). One of the platforms, Kickstarter, soon also offered Kickstarter Live services to all projects published on their platform (Hughes, 2016), confirming that this can be an important message in terms of the transparency and quality of innovation production processes.

External transparency and simultaneous opportunity for crowdfunding of improvements focused on exclusively tourist providers are offered by the TravelStarter platform (Tourmag, 2015); in exchange for financing providers' development activities, crowdfunders are offered diverse packages of benefits for existing and emerging tourist products. In the area of smart cities and their external visibility, the good practice example is the city of Vienna, which recently offered residents a mobile application to propose improvements during their everyday use of city infrastructure (der Standard, 2017). The received proposals are publicly available, as well as their implementation

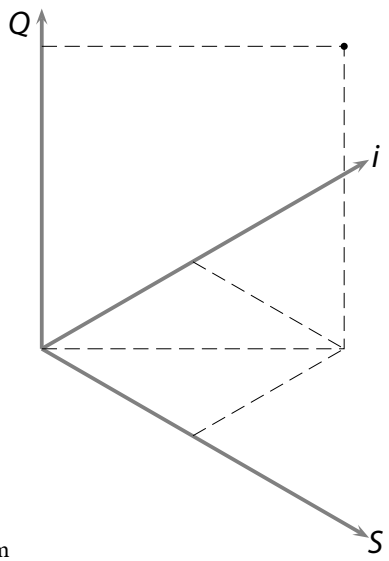

Figure 1
Tourism QiS
Coordinate System

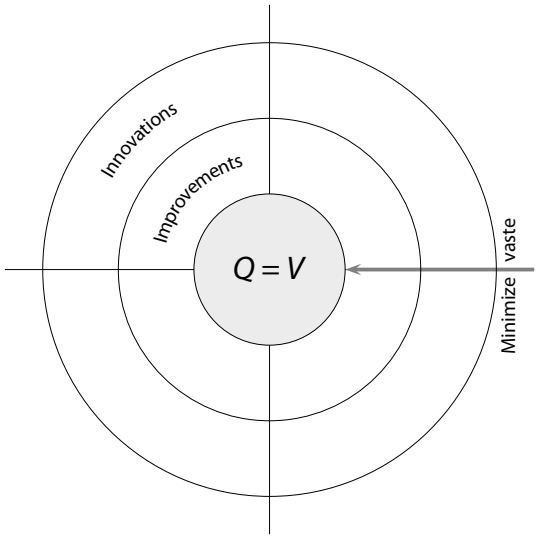

Figure 2 Values Target

statuses, and are part of a larger data network throughout the city. Specifically, the wien.at site offers over 600 e-government services and records eight million pageviews per month, thus confirming the importance of transparency of the information and the consideration of 'each-and-every' member of large human networks in development and service quality-related activities.

Discussion

Based on the presented theories and analysed examples, the basis for thinking about new development guidelines in the current global technological and economic cycle is sustainable development, which includes elements of innovation and quality management (Broman & Robèrt, 2017; Bourke & Roper, 2017). In tourism and beyond, therefore, the priority axes can describe the so-called tourism QiS coordinate system (quality – innovation – sustainability).

Considering the existing or emerging tourist offerings, in view of the shown priority axes, one focus should on: (*S*) sustainability – by which in the widest possible meaning of the word everyone checks whether he plays an optimal and fair game towards all the building blocks of the systems he is part of; (*Q*) quality – by which the companies are thinking about whether and how the guest will get what she expects from them; and (i) innovation – by which companies consider how they can positively surprise their guest. Depending on which axis the company is more or less attentive, it is positioned in the indicated QiS coordinate system.

Quality and innovation are intertwined in the effort to maximise the satisfaction of tourists, as illustrated by the proposed *values target* (Figure 2). At the core of each tourist company's focus are the values and expectations of the targeted customer (Malone et al., 2017). Companies attempt to identify them as much as possible in the process of the fulfilment of the customer's needs. While doing so, the company is guided with strategic decisions about internal (written or unwritten) quality standards. To achieve the $Q = V$ equation, the company has to operate in accordance with the basic principle of most quality management methods: 'minimise waste.'[2] In the process of identifying with the client and optimising its own performance, the company tackles two levels of this minimisation.

At the first level, it seeks to minimise any harmful or unnecessary elements that impede the achieve-

[2] Kaizen, for example, talks about the elimination of waste (Hanebuth, 2002), but since the $Q = V$ quest is a permanent, never completed optimisation process, the minimisation seems a more appropriate term in this case.

ment of $Q = V$ by continuously improving existing business processes and final products. On the second level, it seeks to introduce new processes and products in order to maintain a balance between the offered quality and the (changed) values of the clients. During the optimisation, the values and expectations of the clients can also be exceeded (positively), which can mean that (1) despite its larger investments as competitors, it maintains its competitive advantage, (2) company is expanding or upgrading the target market segment due to exceeding $Q > V$, or (3) company unnecessarily invests and drains itself more than needed. Because of all of this, Figure 1 is shown as a target. The goal of the company is to reach the status $Q = V$: at the daily level it attempts to achieve this with minimal corrections to the existing offer and processes, and occasionally, also by innovating to test the opportunities for targeting additional markets or merely redirecting the focus due to changes in trends and values.

The difference between the two levels, the introduction of improvements and innovations, is adequately explained for the purpose of this contribution by Harvey (2007). In the case of introducing improvements, the question is easy: 'Can the process be improved?' In the case of innovation, the question is more fundamental: 'Are we doing the right thing?' If a company is too intensely focused on the existing processes, there is a risk of overlooking the fact that the process as such has become inadequate and needs to be rebuilt. Thus, the question at the second innovation level withdraws from the current mode of operation and improvement and encourages rethinking what the target's core is (Figure 2). In doing so, it is important to overlook the existing structures in the company and focus on the target values and customer needs; and instead of focusing on the *process improvement* focus on *process design* (Tussyadiah, 2014). For such activities, more knowledge and more risk are required, but the company should decide what will generate greater or optimal added value.

The arguments presented thus far lead to the construction of a final proposal for the systematic introduction of quality principles, continuous improvement and innovation in a tourist destination (QCII model). The tourist company is part of a (geographical) tourist destination, which is (the destination, not the tourist provider) usually perceived as the vacation target to tourists. This mechanism directs all destination stakeholders, including academia (Onn, 2018), towards networked coopetition thinking (Chim-Miki & Batista-Canino, 2017). The QCII model shown in Figure 3 must (spontaneously or through careful planning) evolve into a content- and business-networked destination (Pearce, 2008), which wants for its offer to follow the changing trends and values of guests.

The starting point of the picture is represented by the existing business processes of tourist companies, which are usually or regularly improved to 'minimise waste' – from the smallest tourist providers to chains, such as Sava Hotels & Resorts and Starwood Hotels. The first source of information for such activities are the employees, motivated by tools and methods similar to the KaiNexus tool. Due to the principles of smart networking, as well as internal and external transparency, we are looking for approaches that go even further and are captured in the proposed QCII model. The first requirement is that it must enable tourist providers to obtain the feedback of experts, customer opinions, potential 'coopetition' partners and potential investors in a simple way during the minimisation process.

Investors (financial or with other incentives and rewards) are those individuals and private and public organisations that are in the interest of: (1) participating in the profits of the investee, or (2) the higher quality and performance of the investee, which in return raises the reputation and attractiveness of the entire destination. The investors of both types (1 and 2) are included in the Bank of Tourism Potentials of Slovenia on the national level. The first type is the mentioned example of investing in a sustainable tourism agency. The second type is the financial and promotional awards granted by the state for the purpose of bigger B2B and B2C (both between the competition and among tourists) recognition of the most successful companies and the most promising ideas. Investors of Types 1 and 2 may be interested in both improving and innovating the tourist offer.

In the same way, as in process improvement, the QCII model must be able to connect all the mentioned

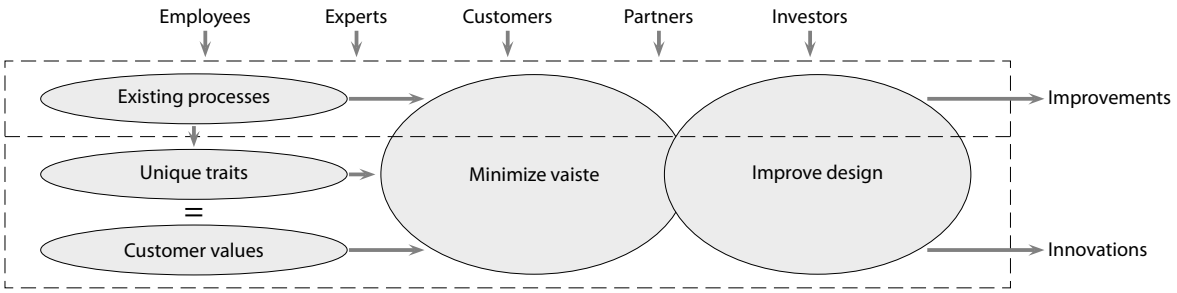

Figure 3 QCII Model of Systematic Introduction of Principles of Quality, Continuous Improvement and Innovation in the Tourist Destination

stakeholders in the case of *innovation.* In accordance with the basic principles of quality management and the presented difference between improvements and innovations, the process begins with the identification of the key competitive advantages, knowledge, previous experiences and vital processes of the company. In the second step, the company attempts to harmonise all of these with the key and perspective values and needs of the targeted customers and, on the basis of these findings, develop a new or radically renewed tourist offering through the partnership development process with all the listed stakeholders.

There is no need to emphasise that the presented QCII model can only function successfully if it is composed of motivated stakeholders from all depicted groups. Nor is it necessary to additionally emphasise that QCII must be part of smart networks, which will not be just another current craze but will be part of a living system that is understood and adopted by most of its population.

Conclusions

The tourist QiS coordinate system (quality – innovation – sustainability), the values target, and the QCII coopetition model have shown general and tourism specific links between quality management, continuous improvement and innovation. Connections are based on the previously presented theoretical foundations and examples of good practices of following the current development trends. One such already mentioned trend is the concept of smart tourism, which emphasises ubiquitous opportunities to connect both technological capacities and business interests of the systems of which we are part. Another more recent and wider trend that confirms 'smart' orientation, suggested throughout this paper, is 'service encounter 2.0,' where new business configurations stem in multi-organisation service systems built from employees, technology and customers (Larivière et al., 2017).

If a shift in the minds of understanding of the destination management principles was required a few years ago (that the company is part of a larger tourist destination and has to act accordingly), a similar shift is taking place today in understanding the concepts of universal and multi-layered sustainability. The technological capabilities and the values associated with global accessibility (as well as the footprints of the human civilisation on Earth and beyond) underline the need for thoughtful linking of the tourist company with stakeholders in the domestic tourist destination and around the world. Such content- and technology-related smart operation is expected from the tourist company and its processes of following the values and needs of its customers. The same applies to all other QCII stakeholders.

Based on the analyses carried out, this article proposes guidelines for further development steps and collaboration, while it should not be taken for granted that all current key trends to follow are correctly included in the utilised forecasts. As with the hitting the target with innovations, there must also be a certain degree of caution present when taking this article into account in the sense that innovation is never a completely predictable process. It is more like a new

opportunity, potentially useful for the next turn on the road, which we do not yet see absolutely clearly. The aim of succeeding research beyond this point is to additionally clarify the picture and add other current and future trends to further conceptual thinking and empirically verify the individual parts of the proposed QCII system. The future studies should include analyses of the capabilities, opinions and intentions of all of the listed stakeholders, as well as analyses of their development and collaboration activities and the effects achieved. All this is facilitated by internal and external sources of knowledge, with the mention of which this article started and ends in the same tone – a prerequisite for achieving quality and innovation (in tourism) is a smart relationship between the exploitation of internal and external knowledge.

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Hotel Employees and Corporate Social Responsibility: The Case of Portorož, Slovenia

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Corporate social responsibility has been widely researched in recent decades across different industries. This paper attempts to explore the social aspects of corporate social responsibility in the hotel industry, focusing on the awareness of CSR of employees in the selected case-study of a hotel company in Portorož, Slovenia. Specifically, their awareness of CSR activities oriented towards the local community was researched. A questionnaire survey was conducted among employees, investigating their awareness of the hotel company's attitude towards the local community. Results show that it is crucial for employees to be employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community. However, they often do not know how their employer carries out activities that are related to the social aspects of corporate social responsibility.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, employees, hotel industry, Portorož, Slovenia

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Introduction

This research paper aims to present the results of quantitative research regarding the social dimension of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the hotel industry in Portorož, Slovenia. CSR can be defined as a contribution of businesses to social, economic, and social development (Garay & Font, 2012). Such contributions were often on a voluntary basis, but because of recent legislative changes, CSR involvement is becoming mandatory. Companies have been engaging in CSR activities, because doing so brings benefits to companies, the environment, and society at large (Carroll, 2015). In recent decades, CSR in general and specifically in the hospitality sector has become an interesting research field with several different aspects being researched (De Bakker et al., 2005). Researchers have attempted to determine the motives for implementing CSR activities and the consequences of such actions on financial performance, organisational competitiveness, brand image, employees' and customers' loyalty, and other factors (Garay & Font, 2012; Lee, 2016).

In the hotel industry, CSR aspects concern human resources, the local community, the environment,

and similar (Holcomb et al., 2007; de Grosbois, 2012; Font et al., 2012; Garay & Font, 2012; Tsai et al., 2012; Sasidharan & Križaj, 2018). Hospitality (and especially the hotel industry) is characterised by high employee turnover, seasonality, and low wages, and CSR provides an opportunity for companies to mitigate these (negative) characteristics.

In the tourism industry, the hotel sector is largely integrated into the local environment; it is inherently connected with it, and it simultaneously depends on the society in which it operates (Abaeian et al., 2014; Mackenzie & Peters, 2014). It is, therefore, not surprising that hotel chains were often among the first to introduce initiatives and policies of social responsibility (Kasim, 2006). The number of surveys dealing with the issue of corporate social responsibility in tourism has increased significantly over the previous 15 years (Farrington et al., 2017); however, there is relatively little research on the issue of social aspects of CSR in hotel companies. In particular, there is little research that deals with the relationship between hotel companies and the local community (Chen & Lin, 2015; de-Miguel-Molina et al., 2018).

The hotel industry has acknowledged social sustainability as a strategically important factor, but the environmental aspect remains predominant, mainly because of its most visible economic benefits. Nevertheless, in the previous decade, there has been a growing body of good practices and research, which also focus on the social aspects of CSR, such as the attitudes towards employees or the local community (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008; Levy & Park, 2011; Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012; Abaeian et al., 2014; Im et al., 2017; Mohammed & Rashid, 2018). We aim to provide an insight into the social aspect of CSR from the perspective of hotel employees since employees are acknowledged as one of the key stakeholders in the research of CSR activities (Kim et al., 2017). In addition, according to Kang et al. (2010), CSR activities in the hotel industry lead to positive changes in employees' mindsets. Several authors (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008; Lee et al., 2013; Youn et al., 2018) have determined that companies' CSR activities significantly contribute to employees' satisfaction and lower employee turnover rates. In this research paper, we present a case study of one hotel company, located in Portorož, Slovenia. Based on the literature review, two research questions were formulated:

RQ1 *What is the employee's awareness of the company's CSR activities oriented towards the local community in the chosen hotel company at the destination Portorož?*

RQ2 *How important is it for employees to work in a company that is actively involved in such activities?*

Methodology

To obtain answers to our research questions, a quantitative method was employed, the results of which will be presented. Based on the literature review, the questionnaire was developed and distributed among the employees in a chosen hotel company.

The questionnaire for employees was developed based on the literature review (Carroll, 1979; Lux et al., 1996; Back et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013); it consisted of 11 questions, of which eight were closed, and three were open. Employees' awareness was measured on a Likert-type ordinal scale with a neutral value (with values: 1 'not true at all,' 2 'not true,' 3 'neither,' 4 'true,' and 5 'absolutely true'). The statements related to the company's attitude towards the local community also had an option 'I do not know/cannot answer.' The questionnaire was tested on a small group of hotel employees and adjusted slightly, according to their comments. The survey was conducted in May 2018. The hotel company employed 452 employees in 2018; all employees were invited to participate in our research, and random sampling was consequently employed. A total of 105 employees (23.23 % of all employees) completed the anonymous questionnaire. For the analysis of the data gathered, SPSS statistical software was used. Descriptive statistics employed for the sample description and the correlation analysis were used to determine the possible relationship between (1) the employee's awareness of the hotel company's attitude towards the local community and the importance of being employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community, and (2) the employee's awareness of the company's attitude towards

Table 1 Employee Awareness of Hotel Companies' CSR Activities towards the Local Community and Level of Information about These Activities

Statements	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Our company helps solve various social problems (financial assistance to employees in distress, employment of disabled people).	3	14	10	15	7	48	3.18	1.185
Our company devotes funds for philanthropic (humanitarian) purposes.	3	3	14	9	6	61	3.34	1.136
Our company encourages the participation of employees in volunteer activities (voluntary participation at local events).	3	5	15	11	7	55	3.34	1.132
Our company supports sport, cultural, and other projects/activities in the local community.	1	12	14	34	15	30	3.91	0.836
Our company cooperates with local organisations (local community, local tourist association, local tourist organisation).	1	2	8	33	13	38	3.96	0.823
I am regularly informed about the developments in the company (in meetings, through newsletters etc.).	4	16	25	35	22	–	3.54	1.114

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) not true at all, (2) not true, (3) neither, (4) true, (5) absolutely true, (6) do not know/cannot answer, (7) arithmetic mean, (8) standard deviation.

the local community and how informed they are regarding company's CSR activities.

Results and Discussion

To analyse the respondent's demographic characteristics, descriptive statistical analysis was used. Most respondents were female (almost 64 %), they fell in the age group between 26 and 36 years (32 %) and had a secondary school education (almost 45 %). Nearly half (48 %) of respondents work in the food and beverage sector (cooks, waiter, etc.), followed by receptionist (30 %). The rest work in wellness, animation, housekeeping, etc. Almost 47 % of respondents have an employment contract of indefinite duration. The remaining have a fixed-term employment contract or work as a student. A little over 70 % of respondents have up to 10 years of working experience in the company.

While all employees were invited to participate in the research, not everyone took part in it. However, random sampling does not necessarily imply a match in the characteristics of the sample and population. According to the publicly available data, more than half of all employees had secondary school education (three or four years), which is in line with the education level of employees in our sample. The same is true also for the gender of the employees (see https://www.ajpes.si/jolp).

The results presented in Table 1 show that the highest-rated statement refers to the fact that the company cooperates with local organisations (mean 3.96), closely followed by the statement that refers to supporting sport, cultural, and other activities in the local community (mean 3.91). According to the standard deviation value, respondents have relatively unanimous opinions regarding both statements (s = 0.823 and 0.836, respectively). The statement with the lowest average value is the one referring to solving the social distress of employees (mean 3.18) and, according to the value of standard deviation (s = 1.185), the respondents' opinions are not so unanimous.

One interesting result is also the fact that many respondents do not know in what way their employer cooperates with the local community. This is particularly true for the first three statements, which deal with solving social problems, allocating funds for humanitarian purposes, and encouraging employees to participate in volunteer activities.

The last statement shows how employees are informed about the CSR activities of their company. Almost 56 % of respondents agree with the statement that they are informed, while the rest believe that they are not regularly informed. The standard deviation is 1.114, and this suggests that the respondents' opinions are not so unanimous. Five respondents did not

Table 2 The Importance of Being Employed in a Company that Participates in the Development of a Local Community

Statements	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
It is important for me to work in a company that participates in the development of a local community.	5	12	32	36	16	3.46	1.054

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) not true at all, (2) not true, (3) neither, (4) true, (5) absolutely true, (6) arithmetic mean, (7) standard deviation.

provide opinions for this statement. One of the possible conclusions is that the hotel company does not pay sufficient attention to informing their employees about how they work with the local community. Businesses need to be aware of the importance of informing employees about socially responsible activities, as also noted by Bhattacharya et al. (2008).

Table 2 shows whether it is important for respondents to be employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community. More than half of the respondents (51.4 %) agree with this statement. In this case, too, we can say that respondents are not so unanimous (s = 1.054). Four respondents did not provide an opinion for this statement.

These findings are in line with previous research in which the authors confirmed the connection between the implementation of social aspects of social responsibility and lower fluctuation rates of employees and the more significant affiliation of employees to the company (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008; Lee et al., 2013; Youn et al., 2018).

We have also checked for correlations between the employee's awareness of the hotel companies' attitude towards the local community and how informed they are regarding the company's CSR activities. For the analysis, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used and, as expected, the analysis resulted in weak positive but statistically significant correlations between variables. The highest correlations were with the CSR practice regarding solving various social problems and supporting sport, cultural, and other projects/activities in the local community (ρ = 0.358, sig. = 0.000, and ρ = 0.302, sig. = 0.003, respectively). This is an important aspect for the hotel companies to consider.

We have also analysed the correlations between the importance of being employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community and employee's awareness of the hotel company's attitude towards the local community. Contrary to our expectations, there were weak positive correlations only between two CSR practices and the importance of being employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community. The two practices refer to solving various social problems and devoting funds for philanthropic (humanitarian) purposes (ρ = 0.288, sig. = 0.005, and ρ = 0.271, sig. = 0.009, respectively). We assume that the weak correlation between the importance of being employed in a company that is committed to CSR practices and the awareness of practices can be attributed to the fact that only the part of CSR oriented towards the local community was explored and not, for example, CSR activities oriented towards the employees themselves.

Conclusion

To answer our research questions, we can say that employees of the chosen hotel company are not aware how the activities related to the social aspects of corporate social responsibility are implemented; in contrast, it is important for them to be employed in a company that participates in the development of a local community, which is in line with findings of previous research, for example, the research done by Tsai et al. (2012) that showed that hotel employees are often not familiar about hotels' CSR activities, whilst Sinha (2017) concluded that whether their employer is active in the field of corporate social responsibility is important for the employee. The results confirm previous theoretical findings and also contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the social aspects of CSR.

Based on research results, several suggestions for the hotel company arise. The hotel company should explain the importance of CRS to employees and, in

the next phase, the employees should be more actively involved in CSR activities. Informing employees about CSR activities through internal newsletters is perhaps not sufficient, so the hotel company should consider other communication channels. According to Schein (2004), individuals, such as department and business managers, play an essential role in influencing employees' mindsets and behaviour, so informing as well as motivating employees within their workgroups may be of crucial importance in the successful implementation of CSR activities.

This research has some limitations that must be considered. The most obvious one is the fact that it examined only one side (that of the employees) and that it is concerned with only one hotel company. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. In the future, it would be interesting to examine the opinion of the employer and then to compare the gathered data. In addition, it would be an added value to broaden the research to more hotel companies within Slovenia and perhaps also nearby across the border.

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Zaznana grožnja COVID-19 in prihodnje izogibanje potovanjem: rezultati zgodnjega primernega vzorca v Sloveniji

Maja Turnšek, Boštjan Brumen, Marjetka Rangus, Mitja Gorenak, Janez Mekinc in Tanja Lešnik Štuhec

Ta študija ponuja posnetek dojemanja slovenskih turistov v zgodovinsko edinstvenem obdobju – zgodnjih dneh karantene, povezane s COVID-19. V študiji smo, v povezavi s turizmom, merili zaznano nevarnost za zdravje, ki jo predstavlja COVID-19, in sicer v dveh dimenzijah: resnost bolezni in dovzetnost za bolezen. Na podlagi spletne ankete, opravljene marca in aprila 2020, študija ponuja prve vpoglede v zaznane grožnje turistov in kako so te odvisne od njihove demografije in preteklih potovalnih izkušenj ter kaj si v tem določenem času mislijo o prihodnjem izogibanju potovanjem. Rezultati so pokazali, da starost vpliva na obe dimenziji zaznane grožnje in prihodnje izogibanje potovanju, vendar le pri ženskah. Poleg tega za ljudi, ki so v preteklosti največ potovali, obstaja manjša verjetnost, da bi se izognili potovanju zaradi pandemije COVID-19. Tisti bolj izobraženi pa po drugi strani zaznavajo večje tveganje, vendar pa izobrazba nima nobene vloge pri njihovem prihodnjem izogibanju potovanjem. Rezultati tudi kažejo, da je moralna obveznost skrbi za druge lahko zelo pomemben element dejavnika uspeha ukrepov COVID-19 in s tem v prihodnje pri povečevanju privlačnosti turistične panoge. Nenazadnje rezultati kažejo, da ne moremo enostavno napovedati, kako se bo splošna populacija obnašala glede prihodnjega izogibanja potovanju, saj mnenja niso skrajno polarizirana. To pa kaže, da bodo ljudje verjetno dovzetni za kontekstualne dejavnike njihovih odločitev, kot so prihodnja zagotovila turistične industrije o zdravstveni varnosti.

Ključne besede: COVID-19, turizem, percepcija grožnje, prihodnje izogibanje potovanjem, apeli strahu
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 3–19

Povezava turizma in gospodarske rasti v Latinski Ameriki in karibskih državah: dokaz s panelnim ARDL

José Alberto Fuinhas, Matheus Belucio, Daniela Castilho, Joana Mateus in Rafaela Caetano

Raziskava se osredotoča na turizem kot način za spodbujanje gospodarske rasti v državah Latinske Amerike in Karibov. Vpliv turizma na gospodarsko rast naj bi imel kratkoročne in dolgoročne učinke. V skladu s tem je bila uporabljena ekonometrična analiza, in sicer model ARDL, ki omogoča to časovno razgradnjo. Rezultati za dvaindvajset držav so pokazali, da investicije v turistični kapital na prebivalca, prihodi turistov (število oseb), poraba električne energije na prebivalca in realni devizni tečaj kratkoročno statistično značilno in pozitivno vplivajo na gospodarsko rast. Po drugi strani pa imajo dolgoročen vpliv le prihodi turistov in poraba električne energije na prebivalca, kar je pozitivna gonilna sila gospodarske rasti na prebivalca. Oblikovalci politik bi morali še naprej razvijati in izvajati ukrepe za privabljanje čim večjega števila turistov ob spodbujanju naložb v turistično industrijo. Vendar pa morajo biti pozorni tudi na druge gospodarske sektorje, da ne bi postali izjemno odvisni zgolj od turistične dejavnosti.

Ključne besede: kapitalske naložbe, turistični prihodi, gospodarska rast, Latinska Amerika in Karibi, ARDL
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 21–34

Erasmus+ mobilnost: empirična raziskava vedenja turistov Erasmus+
Miha Lesjak, Emil Juvan in Eva Podovšovnik

Študenti Erasmus+ predstavljajo velik podsegment izobraževalnih turistov, kar slednjega pozicionira kot atraktiven trg za univerze in destinacijske turistične organizacije. Turistično vedenje študentov Erasmus+ v času njihove mobilnosti je relativno slabo raziskano, zato pričujoča raziskava stremi k razširitvi empirično podprtega znanja o turističnem vedenju študentov v času mobilnosti Erasmus+ mobinosti. Podatke smo zbirali s pomočjo spletne raziskave med vsemi prijavljenimi študenti Erasmus+ v študijskem letu 2016/2017 v Sloveniji. Rezultati kažejo, da je v času mobilnosti kar 93% anketiranih študentov potovalo. Stopnja študija in spol vplivata na turistično vedenje študentov Erasmus+ študentov, zato ti dve značilnosti predstavljata zelo koristna atributa pri oblikovanju turistične ponudbe med turisti Erasmus+. Upoštevajoč zaznane atraktivne značilnosti destinacije ugotavljamo, da moški pretežno iščejo destinacije s privlačnim nočnim življenjem, ženske pa enostavno dostopne, varne in destinacije s privlačno kulturno ponudbo. Ugotovitve nakazujejo, da morajo turistični ponudniki, destinacijske organizacije in univerze tesno sodelovati pri oblikovanju personalizirane turistične ponudbe ter njene promocije med študenti Erasmus+. To je pomembno tako v fazi načrtovanja mobilnosti Erasmus+, ko študenti izbirajo destinacijo in univerzo mobilnosti, ter tudi med samo mobilnostjo, saj študenti Erasmus+ med mobilnostjo aktivno potujejo.

Ključne besede: mobilnost Erasmus+, izobraževanje, mednarodni študenti, privlačnost destinacij, vedenje turistov
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 35–50

Človeški viri v industrijskem turizmu
Barbara Pavlakovič in Eva Jereb

Industrijski turizem se je kot vrsta turizma pojavil pred več kot sto leti, vendar pa se raziskave pojava izvajajo šele v zadnjem času. Večina sedanjih raziskav je usmerjena bodisi na dediščinski industrijski turizem bodisi na več posameznih vidikov, kot so značilnosti obiskovalcev, odnos do lokalnega gospodarstva in podobno. Ta članek poskuša osvetliti kadrovski vidik industrijskega turizma v različnih organizacijah. Naši osnovni raziskovalni metodi sta bili opazovanje z udeležbo (udeležba na organiziranih ogledih po podjetjih) in polstrukturirani intervjuji s predstavniki podjetij. V raziskavi smo opredelili različne obstoječe oblike kadrovskih modelov industrijskega turizma organizacij, ki ga izvajajo, potrebne kompetence za ta delovna mesta in metode izobraževanja zaposlenih v industrijskem turizmu. Na podlagi zbranih rezultatov predlagamo nekaj smernic, s pomočjo katerih lahko podjetja sledijo oblikovanju lastnega produkta industrijskega turizma.

Ključne besede: človeški viri, kompetence, izobraževanje, industrijski turizem, model človeških virov
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 51–65

Monitoring obiskovalcev kot orodje za upravljanje zavarovanih območij
Stanislava Pachrová, Petr Chalupa, Eva Janoušková, Alice Šedivá Neckářová in Leoš Štefka

Članek analizira uporabnost spremljanja obiskovalcev pri upravljanju zavarovanega območja na primeru območja zaščitenega krajinskega območja Moravskega krasa (PLA). Moravski kras je največje in najpomembnejše kraško območje na Češkem. Njegova lega v bližini velikega mesta in lahka dostopnost omogočata, da so nekateri deli PLA izpostavljeni negativnim vplivom, ki jih ima intenzivni turizem na naravne znamenitosti in zaščitene vrste. Medtem ko je prisotnost obiskovalcev na zavarovanem območju zaželena, je treba ustrezno regulirati njihove dejavnosti na območju. Vodstvo PLA potrebuje kakovostne informacije za svoje odločanje – npr. ažurne informacije o značilnostih obiskovalcev in njihovem vedenju. Za pridobitev teh informacij so bile od maja do septembra 2018 na izbranih lokacijah PLA izvedene primarne marketinške raziskave. Za pridobitev podatkov o 2.100 obiskovalcih in za določitev profila obiskovalcev Moravskega krasa je bil uporabljen anketni vprašalnik. Ugotovili smo, da večino obiskovalcev najbolj pritegnejo jame, odprte za javnost, in soteska Macocha, ter da se skoraj četrtina anketirancev namerava vrniti v PLA v naslednjih šestih mesecih. Velik izziv za trajnostni razvoj turizma na tem območju predstavlja dejstvo, da obiskovalci jam niso zainteresirani za obisk drugih krajev v PLA. Podatke, pridobljene o obiskovalcih, bo uprava PLA uporabila za oblikovanje ukrepov za preusmerjanje obiskovalcev z najbolj izpostavljenih lokacij na manj obiskane.

Ključne besede: trajnostni turizem, tržne raziskave, profil obiskovalcev, upravljanje destinacij, zaščiteno krajinsko območje, Moravski kras
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 67–79

Privlačnost kongresnih destinacij: primer ponudbe poslovnega turizma v Sloveniji
Marijana Sikošek

Namen članka je raziskati, kateri atributi privlačnosti kongresne destinacije so tisti, ki so pomembni za obiskanost kongresne destinacije in kongresne prireditve kot njenega temeljnega produkta, in sicer z vidika ponudbe oziroma s stališča ključnih deležnikov, ki na kongresni destinaciji ustvarjajo ponudbo kongresnih prireditev: to je ponudnikov kongresnih storitev in naročnikov kongresa. V prispevku redefiniramo dimenzije obiskanosti kongresne destinacije in koncept kongresnih ponudnikov. Na tej osnovi smo na novo razvili večdimenzionalen konstrukt (model) obiskanosti kongresne destinacije, ki upošteva tri vidike: vidik destinacije, prizorišča in kongresne prireditve kot temeljne celice kongresne ponudbe. Za vsak vidik posebej

smo na osnovi predhodnih raziskav razvili model atributov privlačnosti, ki prispevajo k obisku kongresne destinacije Z raziskavo želimo prispevati k bolj celovitem razumevanju kongresne ponudbe in večdimenzionalni obravnavi atributov privlačnosti kongresne destinacije kot pomembnih dejavnikih njene obiskanosti.

Ključne besede: privlačnost kongresne destinacije, poslovni turizem, atributi privlačnosti konference, atributi privlačnosti kongresne destinacije, atributi privlačnosti prizorišča, obiskanost kongresne destinacije
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 81–95

Povezovanje kakovosti, stalnih izboljšav in inovativnosti v turizmu: QCII metoda

Dejan Križaj

Članek se osredotoča na iskanje presekov med upravljanjem kakovosti, sistemi stalnih izboljšav in inovativnostjo v turizmu. Vsebuje uvodne teoretične vpoglede v vsa tri področja in (v analitičnem delu) obravnava strokovno in znanstveno literaturo z namenom iskanja teoretičnih izhodišč ter nadaljnjih razvojnih smernic, pridobljenih s pomočjo analize primerov dobrih praks in relevantnih trendov. Ugotovitve so povzete v predlagani metodi QCII za izboljševanje in inoviranje kakovostne turistične ponudbe. Poseben poudarek je namenjen vključevanju konceptov trajnosti in pametnega turizma: tako z vidika novih tehnologij in njihove uravnotežene uporabe kot z vidika pazljivega usklajevanja interesov ter povezav med turističnimi podjetji in njihovim okoljem.

Ključne besede: kakovost, stalne izboljšave, inovativnost, pametni turizem
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 97–110

Zaznavanje družbene odgovornosti med zaposlenimi v hotelskem podjetju: študija primera v Portorožu, Slovenija

Tanja Planinc, Zorana Medarić in Kristina Bogataj

Družbena odgovornost podjetij je v zadnjih desetletjih pogosto obravnavana tematika v znanstveni literaturi. V prispevku je predstavljen socialni vidik družbene odgovornosti podjetij v hotelirstvu, s poudarkom na zavedanju zaposlenih o družbeni odgovornosti v izbranem hotelskem podjetju v Portorožu v Sloveniji. Rezultati kažejo, da je za zaposlene pomembno, da so zaposleni v podjetju, ki sodeluje pri razvoju lokalne skupnosti. Po drugi strani pa pogosto ne vedo, kako njihov delodajalec dejansko izvaja aktivnosti, ki so povezane s socialnimi vidiki družbene odgovornosti podjetij.

Ključne besede: družbena odgovornost podjetij, zaposleni, hotelirstvo, Portorož, Slovenija
Academica Turistica, 12(2), 111–116

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Examples of Reference List

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