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original scientific article

A plastics index for the food services industry

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Abstract

Sustainability is an increasingly powerful slogan for environmental consciousness in business and commerce. For all its benefits in enabling our current living standards, the use of plastic has proven to cause significant health and environmental damage. For the tourism industry, food services are of obvious aesthetic importance and are largely marred by the use of plastic items. This article explores the growing interface between all these factors as an increasing segment of tourists bring their health and environmental awareness with them to the dinner table. A co-creative approach to addressing the mounting plastic refuse problem is proposed, with potential benefits to participants. The proposal here is simple: (1) note the plastic items at a place setting, and (2) seek a sustainable alternative.

Key words: food services, health, plastic, pollution, sustainability

"We are the children of the Age of Plastic."

—Werner Boote, *Plastic Planet*

1 Introduction: plastics, civilisation and food services

At a recent academic conference, attendees were treated to food served on plastic plates, to be consumed by using plastic forks, and drinks served in plastic cups. Being among the crowd, I can confirm that the taste and quality of the food was excellent, but the experience felt awkward. After a couple of days, at an exquisite five-star meal with only one piece of plastic on the table, the reasons for the odd feeling were discussed and the idea of a "plastics index" was born. This article details the reasons for the uncomfortable feeling, and proposes an antidote that could, just possibly, do more than simply ease the conscience.

1.1 What is plastic?

Our current civilisation and lifestyles are unthinkable without plastic. In fact, depending on one's definition of the term *plastic,* its use in human civilisation can be traced back as far as ancient Mesoamerica, when natural rubber was processed to make "balls, figurines and bands" in approximately 1600 BC (Andrady & Neal, 2009). Modern thermoplastics arose in the early 19th century, with the development of vulcanised rubber (used for rubber tyres), polystyrene (billiard balls), polyvinyl chloride (PVC, plastic tubing), and viscose (rayon, for clothing) (Andrady & Neal, 2009).

The really explosive development of plastics is, however, a legacy of the 20th century, with "at least 15 new classes of polymer" being developed in the first half of the century (Andrady & Neal, 2009). Currently, there are "some 20 different groups of plastics, each with numerous grades and varieties" (Thompson et al., 2009, citing the Association of Plastics Manufacturers, 2006). And the development of new applications in fields as diverse as medicine, aerospace, construction and packaging is increasing.

Driven by the versatility and cost-effectiveness of plastics, PlasticsEurope estimates global plastics production at 245 million tonnes per year, with a growth rate estimated to be between 5 per cent and 9 per cent per year (2008, as cited in Andrady & Neal, 2009, and Thompson, Swan, Moore & Saal, 2009). Plastics production accounts for approximately 8 per cent of global oil production, and over one-third of that production is used "for disposable items of packaging, most of which are discarded within a year or so of manufacture" (Thompson et al., 2009), with food and beverage packaging accounting for about one-third of this amount. This means that the food and beverage industry accounts for close to 1 per cent of oil production worldwide, and there are no significant signs of a reversal in this trend of expanding usage.

To the contrary; current development and use could be considered "exponential", both in kind of plastics under development and in the increasing diversity of uses where these are deployed (Thompson et al., 2009). Many new plastics technologies are expected to be beneficial, as part of medical advances, reduction of fuel consumption in the transport of goods, in playing a role in renewable energy initiatives, and smart plastics used in packaging may be able to monitor food quality and spoilage (Thompson et al., 2009). Projection of current trends would indicate that we will have more, not less plastic in our future.

Being such a useful, inexpensive and malleable material, plastic is used for just about everything. It is so cheap that we make and use huge quantities of disposables, replacing quality in favor of convenience in an all too routine and unthinking manner.

1.2 Is anything wrong?

At first glance, there seems to be no doubt that plastics have been used to increase consumer health and safety, and have enabled the invention and mass distribution of products that have brought a quality of life to many that was undreamed of in earlier centuries. Yet the irony is that the wide use of these new materials has led to new health problems, problems that have never been seen before. The existence of these new maladies is only slowly coming to light, and policy makers in government are very slow to react to regulate materials that have proven so beneficial to the economy. The invention and development of plastics for use in manufacturing and retail has preceded our knowledge of the effects of these compounds on human health and the environment. Many, if not most, of these new products were brought to market prior to sufficient testing to assess their effects on human health, animal health and the environment.

Viewed more broadly, it can be said that plastics are harmful to human health and the environment throughout the processes of extraction, manufacturing and usage, as well as the disposal life cycle. When thinking about oil extraction, we cannot be unaware of ecological and human disasters such as those in the Niger River Delta and the Gulf of Mexico. Refining oil and processing it into end products such as the ubiquitous rubber ducky or baby bottle involves the emission of chemicals no one wants to have in their "back yard". An increasing number of medical studies raise concerns about using plastics in the ways we currently consider ordinary or "normal". And it is increasingly difficult to find a beach where copious amounts of plastic refuse are not washed ashore on a daily basis.

This article is not a neo-Luddite effort to stop technological development, but rather a call to a specific effort to encourage intelligent decision-making about the use of plastics in the food services industry. In the broad sweep of activity in the food stream, the food services industry provides the penultimate step, at the consumer end of the production-to-consumption chain. With an increasing number of empirical studies raising significant concern, of which the general public is slowly becoming more aware, and with the effects of mass plastic use becoming visible, outstripping nascent attempts to develop bio-neutral plastics, this article suggests that it is time for the food services industry to do its part in addressing the situation, and offers a simple first step in this direction. By showing their commitment to health, environment and food quality, food services companies can benefit from an enhanced reputation while enhancing their customers' dining experience.

2 Spheres of concern and response

The use of plastics in food services is of concern in at least three areas: aesthetics, environment and health; and as consumers become increasingly conscious of the latter two, aesthetic sensibilities at the dinner table are further impacted.

2.1 Aesthetics

As noted above, the presence of plastics on the table cheapens the dining experience, and can extend into colouring the destination experience. Not only are aesthetics a factor in the way plastics impact the dining experience visually, but also consumers are increasingly aware of environmental and health impacts related to plastics. Beyond the purely symbolic elements of the dining experience, the growing awareness of the negative health effects of plastics introduces an incipient fear factor that may even lead to doubts about the food services provider's overall understanding of health issues. And the nearly unavoidable awareness of environmental factors introduces an ethical question into the customer's mind, which could impart a negative hue to an otherwise positive aesthetic presentation.

2.2 Health

> *They hold your water, line your canned goods, and even help save sick babies. But are the potential risks of certain plastics so great they outweigh the benefits?*
>
> —Larry Hand, 2010

The health effects of chemicals associated with plastics begin with their entry into our bodies, food being one major route. The pervasive nature of our exposure from sources in our environment becomes palpable when we consider the list of typical consumer products ubiquitous in most households, not just in industrialised countries, that emit varying levels of endocrine-disrupting compounds (EDCs) at various points along their life cycle. Just look around your home and your workplace – count the number of plastic items that surround you: kitchen utensils, shower curtains, children's toys, clothing, shoes, cosmetics, electronic appliances, furniture and that "new car smell" (Mosko, 2006b).

It is often said that the use of lead in water pipes and cooking vessels contributed to the decline and fall of ancient Rome; could plastic play a similar role in the 21st century? To alter the basic characteristics of plastic to make useful products, chemicals are added to make plastic harder, softer, more or less elastic, more durable and so on. Many of these chemicals, unfortunately, are harmful to human health (Cho et al., 2010; Hand, 2010; Koch & Calafat, 2009; Mosko, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Matsushima et al., 2010; Meeker, Sathyanarayana & Swan, 2009; Saal & Hughes, 2005; Talsness et al., 2009)

Of chief concern are two classes of plastics chemicals: phthalates; and bisphenol A (BPA). Phthalate chemicals, as described by Koch and Calafat (2009), come in a wide variety, and are used as general-purpose plasticisers, with worldwide production at over one million tonnes per year. The ubiquitous polyvinyl chloride (PVC) can have up to 40 per cent phthalate content. The most frequently used phthalate in PVC, di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP), is used in a multitude of consumer products, ranging from floor coverings to medical devices and materials, to "food contact applications" (Meeker et al., 2009). Two other frequently used phthalates, diethyl phthalate (DEP) and dibutyl phthalate (DBP), are used as solvents in cosmetics, lacquers, varnishes and even for time-release coatings on pharmaceuticals. Given their widespread use, these chemicals can enter the human body directly through "ingestion, inhalation and dermal contact", with infants being particularly vulnerable (Meeker, 2009).

BPA is a single chemical compound with wide usage in polycarbonate plastic, epoxy resins, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and PVCs, with production also at over one million tonnes per year (Koch, 2009). In the food industry, the most evident and pervasive usages are for the coatings inside metal food cans, water bottles and baby bottles (Koch & Calafat, 2009; Talsness et al., 2009). These are perhaps the most direct entry points for EDCs into our bodies – as they leach into the foods and beverages we eat and drink, and continuing to leach when these products are thrown into landfills and find their way into the oceans.

2.2.1 Health effects

The health effects manifest themselves first in the vulnerable area of our sex lives. BPA, in particular, disturbs human hormonal balance by mimicking estrogen (Heap, 2009; Meeker, Sathyanarayana & Swan, 2009), and "the male reproductive tract seems to be particularly sensitive to phthalate exposure" (Talsness et al., 2009). Matsushima et al. (2001) cite research using animal tests (with mice) showing that BPA can affect reproductive organs, fertility and the central nervous system, even at low levels. Teuten et al. (2009) note that the chemical additives used to increase the functionality of plastics may be carcinogenic and may disrupt proper endocrine function. And research by prominent professor Fredrick S. vom Saal shows that BPA is also considered an "obesogen", a substance that makes us fat (Wartman, 2012).

And then plastics start to affect our children. Various EDCs from plastic can, according to Guillette (1995, as cited in Talsness et al., 2009), cause permanent changes in developing organisms. An Italian study of newborns (n = 84) showed a correlation between phthalate levels in umbilical cord blood and shortened gestation periods (Latini et al., 2003, as cited in Meeker et al., 2009).

Perhaps the most alarming evidence of the effects of plastics chemicals on human health comes from a study of 667 elementary schoolchildren in Korea, where Soo-Churl Cho and colleagues (2010) found "an inverse relationship between phthalate metabolites and IQ scores", meaning that as the levels of chemicals derived from plastics in children's bloodstream rose, their IQ scores decreased! Few issues are more frightening than hindering the mental development of the next generation.

2.3 Environmental effects: still snaring, starving and leaching after all these years

The continuing accumulation of plastics in landfills and oceans around the globe means that we currently see only the very beginning of problems that will increase in magnitude in coming decades. The profuse amounts of plastic waste already at hand mean that "even if (the accumulation were) stopped immediately", the problems would "persist for centuries" (Barnes et al., 2009).

Though most plastic waste is deposited in landfills, less research is "available on the amounts, rates, fate or impacts" of plastics in landfills than in marine environments (Barnes et al., 2009). Allowing for variation between countries, on a global level plastics account for "approximately 10 per cent of solid waste", but "[u]p to 80 per cent … of the waste that accumulates on land, shorelines, the ocean surface or seabed is plastic" (Barnes et al., 2009). Another analyst estimates that only 20 per cent of trash in the ocean is attributable to cargo spills and deliberate dumping into the sea, with the remaining 80 per cent being washed into rivers that drain into our oceans, or blown there by winds, and that nearly 90 per cent of that trash is plastic (Mosko, 2005a). Barnes et al. (2009) lists three categories of plastic as being most prevalent: bags, fishing equipment and F&B (food and beverage) packaging.

Scientific monitoring (Ryan et al., 2009; Gregory, 2009) confirms and quantifies what nearly every visit to the ocean now makes plain: that plastic refuse invades even the most pristine environments. Monitoring also reveals affected areas that remain hidden to us, such as suspension at various depths in midocean and litter on even the deepest ocean floors. Plastics become encrusted, in a process called "fouling", with "bacteria, algae, animals and accumulated sediment", which weighs them down so that they slowly sink to the "seabed of all seas and oceans across the planet", far away from ultraviolet radiation that would "speed" their disintegration (Barnes et al., 2009).

The first victims of plastic debris in the oceans are marine animals, through entanglement or snaring, and ingestion. Lost and discarded fishing nets continue to ensnare fish, and items such as plastic holders for beverage can "six-packs" sometimes dangerously surround the necks of growing animals, as famously portrayed in the Disney film *Happy Feet*.

Plastic bags can look like jellyfish to turtles, and in the end, "[p]ractically any debris can be mistaken for food" by some animal (Mosko, 2005a). A relatively large amount of scientific literature documents the problems associated with the ingestion of plastics by animals on sea and land. As described by Gregory (2009), the problems include:

> *wounds (internal and external), suppurating skin lesions and ulcerating sores; blockage of digestive tract followed by satiation, starvation and general debilitation often leading to death; reduction in quality of life and reproductive capacity; drowning and limited predator avoidance; impairment of feeding capacity; and the possibility that plastic resin pellets may absorb and concentrate potentially damaging toxic compounds from sea water.*

A further problem is that plastics in seawater absorb chemicals from other sources, adding to their toxic effect when ingested by fish and other sea animals (Barnes et al., 2009). Research in the North Atlantic found that the stomachs of 35 per cent of all fish contained plastic; and Swiss research has shown that ingested plastic produces toxic effects in sea animals (Schmid, 2012).

2.3.1 Breaking up is hard to do

Petroleum-based plastics do not bio-degrade; they only leach chemicals into the earth and water, and break up into smaller and smaller pieces until they become "microplastics", with a longevity estimated at "hundreds to thousands of years", depending on the environment where they lodge (Barnes et al., 2009). Further, this research has shown that in significant areas of the ocean surface, plastic particles can outnumber plankton. Fish consume the particles along with plankton, and then of course plastic ends up where we started: at our dinner table.

2.3.2 Leaching

According to Talsness et al. (2009), leaching of phthalates happens easily because this class of chemicals does not bond to the plastic matrix. While this is a significant problem for oceans and waterways in general, Oehlmann and colleagues (2009, 2048) found that "[c]oncentrations of BPA in sediments are generally several orders of magnitude higher than those in the water".

Though the research-based evidence is not yet at hand, it may well be that we are already eating the plastic we threw away. That bio-accumulation rates are higher in invertebrates than vertebrates (Oehlmann et al., 2009) is of little solace, as humans are at the top of the food chain and accumulation rates of these chemicals are increasing.

These thoughts invade our dinner tables at the sight of each piece of plastic. With each plastic item, customers are placed in a position of being participants in environmental damage, and possibly in damage to their own health. And if there is plastic on the table, what about in the kitchen and therefore in the food? The pervasive use of plastics in food services means that there is little choice. We feel bad about participating in plastic usage, and the more aware consumers feel slightly fearful, yet we need to eat. Can food services establishments offer an alternative?

2.4 Alternatives: recycling and bio-plastics

Response to environmental concerns has included major public sector initiatives in recycling and nascent private sector product development in bio-plastics. According to Ryan et al. (2009), many of the products in the category "biodegradable plastics" actually contain standard plastics that remain present in microscopic form when the object degrades. This raises several issues, including those of definitions and labelling, which are not yet agreed in the public arena.

2.5 Conscience: public policy and consumer participation in systemic change

What we see bothers us enough, and slowly emerging in our consciousness through documentaries and news reports is the realisation that the problems are deeper and more pervasive than we allow ourselves to think (Heal the Bay, 2010). Aesthetic problems associated with plastic are evident in virtually every visit to a beach (Gregory, 2009).

Over time, cumulative toxicity can lead to significant, even frightening results that are increasingly evident to the public and therefore present at various levels of awareness among consumers. Documentary films, such as *The Disappearing Male* (2008), and an increasing number of news articles and health and environmental blogs are spreading awareness to the general public, so that changes in consumer behaviour are to be expected.

And expert groups are beginning to play a public policy role in this topic. Hand (2010) cites the Endocrine Society, a global medical association "representing 14,000 members from more than 100 countries", which recently called for government "regulation of exposure to endocrine disruptors".

Since the use of plastics is integrated into all areas of 21st-century civilisation, change will be needed in a multitude of areas to maximise benefits and minimise the health and environmental problems of plastics.

Governments have started to respond to the emerging medical data, with varying speed and consistency. In response to health concerns, Canada banned the use of BPA in baby bottles in 2008; in 2009, polycarbonate water cooler bottles were banned from city buildings in Copenhagen; also in 2009, BPA-containing baby products were banned by Suffolk County, New York; and the US Food and Drug Administration has made statements on both sides of the fence (Hand, 2010).

In examining policy options for the UK government, Shaxson (2009) discusses the cross currents of various departments and levels of government with responsibilities relevant to plastics issues. Shaxson argues for a multi-party approach that includes "academia, industry, [and] other stakeholders" (2009), focusing well and appropriately on the production end of industry. But her analysis overlooks the potential of service industries and consumer groups. The "Plastics Road Map" she proposes, tracing the entire product life cycle, would likely include these stakeholders, since the intent of the process would be to "open up a broad debate", yet her "road map" is focussed on forming government policy in the UK, not on generating a universal list of actions for all actors to consider.

Independent initiatives can make a difference both in government policy and in changing consumer behaviour. For example, in Santa Monica, California, local law was changed to mandate an end to the use of plastic bags due to a citizens' initiative that included a widely circulated video "mockumentary" [*sic*] called *The Magic Plastic Bag,* featuring environmental concerns (Heal the Bay, 2010).

The power of consumer spending is sought after in the world of brand management, marketing and sales, and is increasingly being directed towards social change objectives. In what we could call the "conscience" or "ethics" approach, the growth of independent labels addressing fair trade, environmental impact, animal testing and organic food production shows that increasing numbers of consumers care about the meaning of their spending, not just the product or service they receive. Gabriel & Lang (2008) argue that this is a general phenomenon, since "decades of consumerism have not delivered unequivocal happiness", and that increasing numbers of people are seeking a way to feel good about their spending.

Conventional logic holds that to compete with current plastic packaging, alternatives will either need to be more cost-effective at a single bottom-line accounting, or to convince decision makers that a multiple bottom-line accounting system that includes measures for the health and environmental burdens of the full product life cycle demands their ethical attention and concomitant decisions. Needless to say, single-bottom-liners dominate, and join "ethical" bandwagons when consumer behaviours indicate their buying decisions are moving significantly in that direction. The idealists create the new forms of market behaviour, and the "bean counters" join in when it proves profitable.

The need is slowly growing in public awareness to find alternatives that address the multiple drags on our consciences from the environment, health and social justice. What customers –including food services customers – demand changes over time; by detecting the concerns of thought leaders it is sometimes possible to gain market share through anticipating shifts in these demands. Hand (2010) points out that some savvy producers have already begun to produce baby bottles and other products for infants in anticipation of consumer demands and regulations from lawmakers. Can the food industry show similar foresight?

2.5.1 Potential food industry responses

Perhaps not entirely consciously, a variety of perceptions invade our dinner tables at the sight of each piece of plastic. Even items made for long-term use, such as a plastic saltshaker, will eventually end up as refuse, leaching harmful chemicals into the groundwater or ocean. Food services customers are thereby placed in a position of being participants in environmental damage. The pervasive use of plastic in food production and consumption means that there is often little or no choice. We feel bad about plastic usage, for the harm it does to the environment and ourselves, yet we must eat to live.

The Plastics Index, proposed here, expands, in a limited yet visible way, our range of choice, thereby enabling a response that is appropriate to the situation and can motivate purchasing decisions which consumers can identify with and feel good about. It can be anticipated that use of the Plastics Index will address both the rational and irrational aspects of customer agency described by Korczynski and Tyler (2008).

With the effects of plastic on the environment becoming ever more visible, and medical research increasing our knowledge of the negative effects of plastics and their attendant chemicals on our health, there is a growing sense of unease among the more conscious customers when faced with potential hazards. This sense of unease at the sight of something as ubiquitous as a small plastic container of coffee creamer may still be unconscious for most, yet there can be no doubt about the direction of change. Consumer demands for less plastic at the dinner table seem bound to emerge more forcefully in the coming decade.

How to get ahead of the curve? A lesson can be taken from the response to the BSE ("mad cow") disease crisis of a decade ago. To allay customer fears about eating meat, restaurant menus began listing the country of origin for their meats. And customers responded positively. This interface, directly at the restaurant and catering service dinner table, can again be used to address the plastics problem.

Unlike BSE, an acute problem, the health and environmental problems with plastics are chronic, growing slowly yet steadily. Like the proverbial frog placed in a cooking pot, awareness of the problem grows slowly as the water gets warmer, and threshold events that awaken public awareness are not likely. Nonetheless, given the pervasiveness and visibility of the problems, a tide of concern may develop in the coming years, affecting consumer perceptions and behaviours. Food services companies wishing to position themselves (Ries and Trout, 2001) in a market of increasingly uncomfortable frogs should consider the Plastics Index as an opportunity.

3 Plastics indexing

3.1 How to kick a habit

A useful technique used by some smokers to help them kick the habit is to simply write down the rationalisations they have for continuing to smoke whenever these arise. By becoming more conscious of each justification, and because it is slightly annoying to follow one's own commitment to keep the record, smokers slowly defeat their addiction one decision at a time (American Cancer Society, 2012).

The Plastics Index proposed here follows a similar logic: become more aware of the amount of plastic being used in specific food services settings, thereby motivating a search for more sustainable, healthy and aesthetically pleasing alternatives at the next purchase decision.

3.2 A Plastics index for the service provider – customer interface

Customers are increasingly seeking opportunities to "co-create" their experiences in tourism and hospitality. This note proposes the development of a "Plastics Index" for rating food services acts. The index would be simply an account of the number of plastic items used at an average place setting. For example:

Plastic plate	1
Spoon, knife, fork	1
Plastic cup	1
Butter containers	1
Plastic wrapping	1
Plastic chair & table	2
Total	7

In counting the number of kinds of items, it is not the amount of waste per se that is the focus. Rather, it is the search for alternatives and emphasis on decision-making. In other words, even if three plastic butter containers are used, or none at all, the index registers one item, representing one purchase decision by the food services provider. Similarly, since cutlery usually comes in sets, replacing plastic spoon, knife and fork is one decision.

This focus on the notion of replacing the item as such spotlights the responsibility of the business, and not the amount of waste generated in that context by the customer. The latter could lead to restricted consumption and a diminished dining experience for the consumer ("I would like more butter, but that would add more plastic waste …"). Similarly, though a typical single-serving butter container consists of a plastic base and a "plasticised" aluminum top, this counts as one item. Lowering the index in this case would require the food services organisation to find a different, more sustainable way to deliver butter to an end user. Restaurants that serve outside may choose plastic tables and chairs on financial grounds; the index may nudge some towards wood or metal when replacing their outdoor furniture.

This also gives caterers an argument that may help mitigate an increased price scale. Marketing and sales statements could look something like this:

Being concerned with the environment, your health and dining experience, we have reduced our use of plastic to the greatest extent possible. We favor the use of reusable utensils, such as metal cutlery and ceramic plates. Where this is not practical, such as in catering outdoor events, we now use disposable utensils that are made of renewable, biodegradable materials.

The message becomes attractive, drawing on widespread and growing concern about material waste. If a consumer raises issue with a plastic fork, the response can now be educational, providing an opportunity for the food services firm to show its ecological conscience in a way that is likely to increase customer loyalty.

By engaging the service provider – customer interface, the Plastics Index enables a moment of co-creation where the customer can identify with and share a higher ideal in a way that is similar to the various fair trade and eco-friendly initiatives current in today's marketplace. This impulse could even have a ripple effect on consumer behaviour in other arenas; one could imagine comments such as "do these bananas really have to be sold in a plastic bag?"

3.3 A plastics index for kitchens and beyond?

The Plastics Index at the customer interface can also act as a mind opener (Kegan and Lahey, 2001), leading to questions in adjacent areas of activity. The first and most logical next step is in the kitchen; and this is where the larger market-adjusting impact may be most clearly felt. If persons responsible for procurement "get religion" (become convicted) on this issue, their decisions and concomitant messages can be sent up the production chain.

There are two areas of concern in kitchens: (1) the packaging for food products and (2) utensils and cooking implements. While aesthetics play less of a role in production facilities, employee choice of workplace and owner concerns may become a factor. Therefore, the focus is on health and environmental effects: the amount of contact foodstuffs have with plastic, and the environmental effects of disposing.

To produce a Plastics Index for kitchens is nearly as simple as for the dining table: account for each food product as either having plastic in the packaging or not. This simple yes/no will yield a percentage at the end. Utensils and cooking implements that come into contact with food can be similarly counted. The "pushback" from end users to wholesalers and on to manufacturers will certainly take time, and the size of the problem is significant. We are speaking about perhaps 1 per cent of global oil production that is used for packaging in the food industry.

The point is to increase awareness, then change purchasing behaviour, and ultimately impact production processes. Similar indexes could be developed for food processing plants and also reach back into production processes.

3.4 Limits for the index?

In developing the idea for an index, several considerations should be discussed. First, why not use a "Disposables Index" or a more complex "Sustainable Consumption Index" instead?

A Disposables Index could track the use of paper napkins and so on, in addition to plastics. This would miss the reusable plastics, and since paper products such as napkins are recyclable and from renewable resources, the discussion would become more complex. This begs the question of whether what should be developed is a Sustainability Index for meals. While this could be more comprehensive, the process of developing the index could become highly complex and politically divisive. For example, how would one rate the various energy usages for cooking and washing? And how about the energy used and ecological considerations attached to the method of agriculture used for each food item? While all these considerations are valid concerns for the ecological management of the planet, they would lead the discussion into controversy beyond their utility. The list of concerns could become virtually infinite, and ultimately the exercise would likely end in futility.

In favor of a Plastics Index are ease of use and recognition. It also has an aesthetic component – plastic does not ennoble at the dinner table, it cheapens. The hospitality industry could address presentation quality, dining experience and sustainability in one simple number. While some plastic items are reusable, their end disposal remains difficult in spite of some new developments in recycling technology.

Recycling is, of course, a positive behaviour. Yet the recycling process itself consumes energy, and because the original manufacturing process is a heavy polluter, it is best to consider the issue of recycling separately and not seek to factor this aspect into the index.

In accounting that uses a multiple bottom line, to account for resources used and broader impact beyond a simple one-factor bottom line (financial profit), the Plastics Index should be seen as a welcome addition to the change process.

4 Conclusions

> *Since WWII we have made a complete about-face from a "fix it and make it do" to a "use it once and toss it" society, with plastics playing a starring role.*
>
> *—Sarah S. Mosko, Ph.D., 2006c*

> *The belief among scientists is that the window of opportunity to take action is narrow. There is little time left in which we can still act to prevent irreversible, catastrophic changes to marine eco systems as we see them today.*
>
> *– International Programme on the State of the Ocean, 2008*

4.1 What do we hope to gain?

The Plastics Index is aimed at a general reduction of the overall use of plastic in the food stream. Taken as a whole, the general awareness and subsequent behavioural impact generated may influence purchasing patterns that favor less packaging or different packaging, thereby encouraging holistic and sustainable forms of production and processing, and encourage a trend towards direct purchases from local farms. Use of the terms "slow food" and "real food" may become more widespread as a result, helping to break the "fraternity of ideas" and assumptions that provide the conceptual foundations of the food industry (Salatin, 2010).

This is not a call to a puritanical or Luddite reaction; it is a call to common sense. This article proposes increased consumer action aimed at moving our civilisation, from where we are currently, towards a better use of resources and healthier lifestyles. Some will move faster than others in making conscious choices that align more closely with environmental and human health.

4.2 Call for research and action

With less plastic, the food services industry could be ennobled, not only through an improved presentation at the table, but also through exhibiting concern for customer health and demonstrating a "corporate social responsibility" commitment to environmental sustainability. Support could be offered to researchers working on ecological packaging, and for the implementation of emergent technologies. For example:

- Plastics manufacturing currently being developed to monitor food spoilage should be merged with biodegradable materials for optimisation of resources usage.

- Supplier practices to optimise resources usage such as local food production and sales, such as the "from the region—for the region" programme.

This article proposes the creation of structured opportunities for some ecologically smart pushback to come from consumers to food services companies regarding the use of plastics. And it argues that these companies should see their best interest, as business enterprises and as human beings, in co-creating these events of social communication and change. We could also hope that these cooperative scenarios at restaurant tables would have ripple effects in purchasing decisions by food services businesses, through self-initiated kitchen audits of plastic usage, more conscious efforts in recycling and visible signs of pride in promoting ecological consciousness. Such image and identity change in the direction of social responsibility is seen as attractive by many consumers, and one could hope that pushback from customers to restaurants could eventually reach a level where the pressure would have a positive effect on manufacturers. With the increasing fragility of our environment ever more evident, can we face the thought of our children and grandchildren regarding us as poor stewards of God's creation because we refused to do something as simple as count the plastic?

Indeks plastike v gostinstvu

Povzetek

Trajnostni razvoj postaja čedalje pogostejši in močnejši slogan za okoljsko zavest v podjetništvu in trgovini. Kljub številnim koristnim uporabam plastike, ki omogočajo vzdrževanje sodobnega življenjskega standarda, je uporaba plastičnih izdelkov dokazano škodljiva zdravju in okolju. Za turistično gospodarstvo so nekateri vidiki gostinske storitve predvsem estetskega pomena, a žal v veliki meri zaznamovani z uporabo plastičnih izdelkov. Članek preučuje vse močnejšo povezavo med temi dejavniki v času, ko ima vse večji segment turistov nove zahteve, povezane z naraščajočo zdravstveno in okoljsko osveščenostjo. Prispevek predlaga pristop k reševanju naraščajočega problema odstranjevanja plastičnih odpadkov, ki temelji na sodelovanju in bi lahko prinašal koristi vsem udeležencem. Predlog je preprost: (1) popisati uporabo plastičnih izdelkov na posamezni lokaciji in (2) poiskati trajnostne alternative.

Ključne besede: prehrambene storitve, zdravje, plastika, onesnaževanje, trajnostni razvoj

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review scientific article

Segmentation in tourism: a holistic approach for future research

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of segmentation research issues in the field of tourism. Several gaps in tourism segmentation research are highlighted. Research in this area is usually limited to identification of market segments. Hence, it does not address questions about compatibility, financial issues, possible resources or the implementation of segments into marketing practice. To date, there is a lack of comparative analysis of segments in tourism, in terms of both different time periods and competing destinations. Following the identification of gaps in tourism segmentation research, a holistic approach to segmentation in tourism is presented as a tool for filling these gaps. The proposed approach is an ongoing, cyclical process that can be applied by tourism destinations and tourism suppliers.

Key words: segmentation, tourism, research

1 Introduction

Segmentation has been widely used by academics and practitioners in tourism marketing for decades. Although segmentation contributes to a better understanding of tourism consumers, the results and findings of segmentation studies are destination- or product-specific (Goller et al., 2002) and cannot be generalized (Frochot & Morrison, 2000). This lack of transferable findings has led to a profusion of studies. For example, there have been studies of the segments of visitors to national parks (Beh & Bruhere, 2007), specific resorts (Inbaharan & Jackson, 2005), casinos (Lee et al., 2006) and festivals (Lee et al., 2004).

Segmentation is a crucial tool for selecting target markets and for market (re)positioning (Kotler et al., 2010). Indeed, there is a large body of literature on segmentation in the tourism industry, including several pieces of research reviewing segmentation studies and emphasizing the importance of segmentation in tourism marketing. For example, Dolnicar and Gruen (2008) performed a review of 32 segmentation studies published between 2000 and 2005 in highly rated international tourism journals. Similarly, Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2011) reviewed 120 segmentation studies on tourism events published between 2002 and 2008. Even earlier, Frochot and Morrison (2000) reviewed writings that showed the benefit of segmentation studies in tourism.

This paper aims to present a comprehensive summary of the characteristics of tourism segmentation studies as well as to identify the gaps in tourism segmentation research and, further, to propose a holistic segmentation framework designed to yield recommendations for further tourism segmentation research. The limitation of this paper is that studies published only in highly ranked tourism journals were included in the research.

The paper is structured as follows. First, the types of tourism segmentation are described. Then the gaps in tourism segmentation research are investigated. Next, the holistic tourism segmentation framework is proposed. The paper concludes with recommendations for further tourism segmentation research.

2 Types of segmentation analysis in tourism marketing

Market segmentation divides heterogeneous consumers in the market into homogeneous segments (Middleton et al., 2009). According to Doyle (2002), segmentation helps to better meet the needs of consumers and thereby retain them, to enhance profits and opportunities for growth, to improve targeted communication and market share, and to stimulate innovation. Doyle argues that increasing profits through segmented marketing encourages innovation in the form of the introduction of new products into the market.

However, even homogeneous groups of visitors can be seen from different aspects. As Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2011, 426) state, "There is no one correct way to segment a market". A broad review of the literature shows that segmentation techniques are based predominantly on the viewpoint of consumers. Consequently, the perspectives of other stakeholders are neglected. Tkaczynski et al. (2009) and Tkaczynski et al. (2010) recommend including other stakeholders, such as tourism providers, investors, employees, industry experts and residents, who could provide additional understanding of consumers and their behavior. One of the few studies to focus on non-consumer stakeholders was published by Ravnikar and Planinc (2011), who investigated tourism suppliers.

Review of the literature shows that segmentation is usually destination- or product-specific. As such, there is an inherent limitation to its generalization (Goller et al., 2002; Dolnicar, 2004). In short, segments of visitors to a specific destination cannot be applied to other destinations. There must be a match between destination segments and segments of tourism suppliers (Dolnicar, 2004), but to date research has focused either on segments in a destination or on segments of tourism suppliers, neglecting the relationship between the two segments. Similarly, Shoemaker et al. (2007, 342) discuss the need for compatible segments to coexist. Furthermore, research on compatibility between segments is crucial for successful innovation in and implementation of destination marketing (Križaj & Črnigoj, 2008).

Various consumer characteristics, such as geographic, demographic, psychographic, motivational, expenditure and activity, are used in segmentation research to divide the market (for example, Dolnicar & Leisch, 2003; Fernandez-Morales & Mayorga-Toledano, 2008; Diaz-Perez et al., 2005; Koc & Altinay, 2007; Nemec Rudež et al., 2011). The choice of variables has an important impact on research results. Further, Tkaczynski et al. (2009) found that various combinations of consumer characteristics (demographic, behavioral, etc.) are typically used in tourism research. Frochot and Morrison (2005), however, show that some variables related to visitor motivation and behaviour are generally used in combination with other variables that are destination-specific.

Besides being based on various consumer characteristics, segmentation can be divided into *a posteriori* and *a priori*. The *a posteriori* or data-driven method of segmentation identifies the characteristics of segments after data are acquired. Motivation or activity segmentation is an example of *a posteriori* segmentation technique because the segments and their identifying characteristics are not known in advance. On the other hand, demographic and geographic segmentation are so-called *a priori* segmentation methods since these characteristics are known in advance (Yannopoulos & Rotenberg, 1999). Tkaczynski et al. (2009) argue that some characteristics of consumers yield more knowledge about segments than others. More specifically, motivation or activity segmentation using an *a posteriori* segmentation technique can predict consumer behavior and can play an important role in decision making for managers and destination policy makers, whereas demographic and geographic segmentation fail to predict consumer behavior and do not produce information that can be used in designing the product. Rather, demographic and geographic segmentation are important for choosing the marketing media and for media budget allocation. However, Johns and Gyimothy (2002) and Lehto et al. (2002) argue, respectively, that geographic and demographic segmentation have been overused and overestimated, because they are unable to predict the behaviour of customers.

Regarding comparison of segments between different time periods or among tourism destinations, Dolnicar (2004) warns that *a posteriori* segmentation is a complex and exploratory field, because the comparison of segmentation studies is complex and decreases reliability of results. Dolnicar reasons that, although segmentation comparison is based on the use of the same questionnaire and the same sampling method, the possibility of some distortions cannot be excluded. However, tracking segments in different periods of time is crucial for monitoring development and implementation of positioning strategy for tourism destinations and/or tourism suppliers. The season under investigation is also important when determining segments of tourism consumers. Calantone and Johar (1984), Gitelson and Kertsetter (1990), Bonn et al. (1992) and Diaz-Perez et al. (2005) found that segments of visitors differ between seasons. Just a few studies, however, have highlighted the importance of seasons in tourism segmentation. Dolnicar and Leisch (2003) identified segments of winter tourists. Similarly, Spencer and Holecek (2007) investigated the characteristics of autumn tourists. Comparison of segments between competing tourism destinations is also recommended, but only a few studies have focused on it. Prašnikar et al. (2006; 2007) compare segments of tourists to Portorož and its two close competitors, Grado in Italy and Opatija in Croatia, using segmentation by motives of tourists.

The literature review shows that the method most often used to study and identify market segments is factor-cluster analysis, but there are also other methods, such as neural networking (Bloom, 2005) and econometric methods (Figini & Vici, 2011). Factor-cluster analysis is the most widespread in the literature.

3 Gaps in tourism segmentation research

More than a decade ago, Yannopouluos and Rotenberg (1999, 43) stated that market segmentation research is increasing among tourism researchers and tourism organizations in order to make their marketing efforts more effective. Even so, Goller et al. (2002, 252) found that segmentation research efforts are focused on "development of segmentation bases and models at the expense of a more strategic view" and that there are "gaps between theory and implementation and better recommendations to practitioners". Indeed, strategic marketing should focus on implementation of segments into marketing strategies and monitoring. Review of the literature on tourism segmentation shows that segmentation research usually has some managerial implications, such as recommendations on marketing mix development, tourism supply differentiation and identification of market opportunities, but the recommendations tend to be rather general and therefore not that useful. For example, Tisotsou and Vasioti (2006, 71) provide common recommendations which can be applied to any other type of segmentation research in the field of tourism destination. Their study stated that segmentation results could "firstly, provide the base for target marketing, secondly, assist in developing more effective marketing mixes in order to satisfy the needs of specific visitor segments, thirdly, facilitate destination differentiation, and fourthly, provide easier identification of market opportunities and threats". This example illustrates the weakness of segmentation studies, in that guidelines are often too general to result in implementation of successful marketing strategies.

Additionally, Frochot and Morrison (2000, 36) state that research in tourism segmentation should consider the profitability, accessibility and reachability of segments. The review of the literature shows that these concepts are neglected. Similarly, Shoemaker et al. (2009) define seven questions or tests to which each segment should be subjected. The questions are: Is it homogeneous? Can it be identified? Can it be measured? Can it be reached economically? Can a differential in competitive advantage be maximized and preserved? Is it compatible with other segments we may have at the same time? Are the segments large enough and/or profitable enough? Frochot and Morrison (2000) and Jang et al. (2002) state that marketing strategies should consider quantifiable profitability and risk evaluation criteria of segments. Loker and Perdue (1992) represent one of the few studies researching the profitability of segments. Going further, Doyle (2002, 76) urges that suppliers "shift resources out of maturing market segments into the new emerging ones", highlighting the issue of profitability of segments and the importance of their continued research.

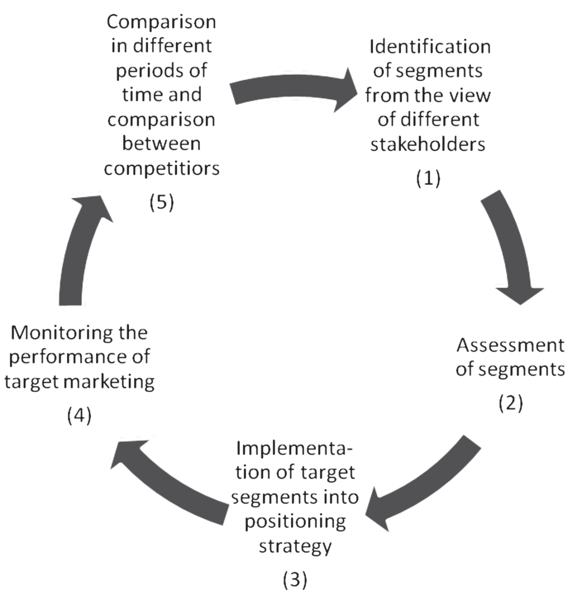
It can be seen that studies on segmentation in tourism are concentrated in just a small set of areas, leaving a set of gaps that can be addressed by a holistic segmentation approach. Goller et al. (2002) developed an integrated segmentation framework to help overcome the gaps in segmentation research. It consists of four components which follow each other in sequence. These are (1) segmentation analysis, (2) evaluation of segmentation consisting of "segmentability" (homogenization of segments) and target market selection, (3) integration of findings into strategy and resource allocation and (4) monitoring of segmentation that includes review of the stability of segments and effectiveness of marketing strategies. It is a general model that does not consider the specifics of tourism destinations or the need for compatibility of segments for a given destination.

4 Holistic approach to segmentation in tourism

The proposed holistic approach to tourism segmentation offers a comprehensive framework for useful segmentation outputs and tangible results. It is proposed in the form of a cycle, which starts with the assessment of tourists by different stakeholders (Figure 1). At the first stage, the heterogeneous market is divided into more homogeneous groups of consumers, according to the view of the various stakeholders in tourism destination. At the second stage, when the distinct segments have been identified, their compatibility is assessed. At this stage, the segments should be analyzed as to whether they can be reached economically and whether it would be possible to develop a competitive advantage for the distinct segments. Segmentation research generally skips this step, focusing only on identification of market segments and some general recommendations for implementation.

As part of the third stage, target segments are implemented into a positioning strategy. Product development and market communication should be targeted to distinct segments. At the fourth stage, implementation is monitored in order to provide feedback to researchers and other interested audiences. It is recommended that the process be repeated at different times (stage 5) to derive comparisons for the different seasons of the year. Altogether, the cycle forms an ongoing process for the continuous assessment of market evolution.

Fig. 1: *Holistic tourism segmentation cycle*



The most problematic point in the proposed approach is the implementation of research findings into practice since this requires allocation of available resources and investment. Although funding is not, as a rule, explicitly discussed in research studies, it is assumed that tourism segmentation research is not driven predominantly by investors and is not financed by them. This funding gap may largely account for the general lack of implementation of segmentation research results. Overall, the question arises as to whether investors and tourism suppliers are aware of the research findings and whether they are willing to implement the results into practice.

5 Conclusion

This paper presents a comprehensive synthesis of the various issues in tourism segmentation. Through a review of the literature, the paper identifies areas for further tourism segmentation research and provides an introduction to a holistic approach to segmentation in tourism. To address gaps in tourism segmentation, the holistic tourism segmentation approach is structured in the form of an ongoing cyclical process.

Several points are highlighted in regard to tourism segmentation research. First, segmentation studies are specific to a particular situation in a specific period of time. Second, the choice of basis and variables used in segmentation depends on the researcher and, therefore, the output is subjective and always subject to debate. Even so, the choice of variables determines the results. Third, tourism segmentation research should include profitability, reachability and compatibility of segments, as well as investigating the competitive advantages of segments. Fourth, the application of identified segments to other, even similar, destinations or tourism products is not recommended because of the uniqueness of each. This lack of transferability has resulted in the vast body of literature on tourism segmentation. Fifth, comparison of segments between destinations and between different time periods is recommended. There are only a few studies that compare segments between time periods or between destinations. The reason probably lies in the complexity of such comparisons. Sixth, research on segmentation in tourism is limited to the viewpoint of consumers, omitting the viewpoint of other stakeholders, such as investors, tourism suppliers and employees. The last and most important finding is that academic research in tourism segmentation seems to be isolated and ineffective, since it is not used to design and implement appropriate marketing mixes and positioning strategies. However, it is also true that recommendations made in tourism segmentation research are typically general in nature and lack consistent guidelines. In summary, the holistic tourism segmentation approach seeks to overcome the above-mentioned gaps and ensure a coherent and comprehensive framework of tourism segmentation. Thus, segmentation research in tourism must expand to neglected areas (such as economic aspects and compatibility of segments) and offer guidelines to destination marketers and destination-policy decision makers. In other words, segmentation research must be effectively implemented. Putting segmentation research into practice, in turn, calls for investors able to implement and monitor products and promotion for distinct segments.

As the final word, researchers in the field of strategic marketing and (re)positioning strategies must to take into account that identification of distinct segments is just the first step of the holistic segmentation process, that calls for follow-through application and cooperation with destination policy makers and tourism suppliers to achieve good marketing results in practice.

Segmentiranje v turizmu: celovit pristop za nadaljnje raziskovanje

Povzetek

Članek podaja pregled raziskav o segmentiranju trga na področju turizma. Poudarjene so različne vrzeli na področju segmentiranja turističnega trga. Raziskave tega področja so navadno omejene na identificiranje tržnih segmentov, in ne na področje združljivosti segmentov, finančnih vidikov, virov ali implementacije tržnih segmentov v trženjsko prakso. Dosedanje raziskave odražajo pomanjkanje primerjalne analize segmentov v turizmu tako s časovnega vidika kot z vidika primerjave med različnimi destinacijami. Skladno z identificiranjem vrzeli obstoječih raziskav na področju segmentiranja v turizmu je predstavljen celovit pristop segmentiranja turističnega trga kot orodje za odpravo teh vrzeli. Predstavljeni krožni, ponavljajoči se model lahko uporabljajo turistične destinacije in turistični ponudniki.

Ključne besede: segmentiranje, turizem, raziskovanje

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original scientific article

The impact of economic crisis on the motivation to work in food service: The case of the municipality of Piran

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Abstract

This study examines factors that help to attract, retain and motivate employees in the hospitality industry. The survey was conducted in the municipality of Piran, the most developed Slovenian municipality and an important tourist centre in the northern Mediterranean. The aim of this study was to determine the key factors that motivate people to work as servers. Respondents were asked to rate the six key factors that motivated them to work in the catering industry. The findings show that in times of economic crisis, money is the most important motivating factor. Other significant motivational factors identified are strongly associated with worker age and type of catering facility. Our findings are consistent with attribution-based motivational theories, which are based on the theory of choice, stating that individuals are primarily motivated by the factor that meets their most important need. Motivational theories whose tenets underpin our research are briefly discussed. Practical considerations for managers of catering businesses, that is, how to selectively engage and motivate different groups of employees in different types of facilities, are discussed in conclusion.

Key words: Food service workers, motivation, recession, municipality of Piran

1 Introduction

As in nations across the world, tourism is an important sector of the Slovenian economy. Tourism accounts for 2.5 per cent of Slovenia's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 3.3 per cent of the country's total working population (SURS[1], 2011). This study was conducted in the municipality of Piran, which the most developed municipality in Slovenia and an important tourism centre. Tourism is the major local (municipal) economic activity. Twenty-five per cent of the municipality's workers are employed in tourism-related businesses (SURS, 2011).

Motivation, attraction and retention of employees represent one of the major challenges in the food service industry. Despite the economic crisis, the industry is plagued by a serious labour shortage and high level of staff turnover. The demand for professionally qualified staff is constantly increasing. According to the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ), higher-cadre jobs, such as chef, waiter and head of service, remain the most sought after. Jobs in the food service industry involve specific working conditions (e.g. physical effort, split schedules, strict hygiene rules). In addition, food service employees are expected to display certain characteristics, such as emotional stability, resourcefulness, a respectful attitude to employees and property and high ethical values. Food service is also characterised by low wages, which further reduces the interest in these jobs (Šuligoj, 2006; Raspor, 2011). According to SURS (2012), the average monthly gross salary in Slovenia for August 2012 was €1,512.00 (€985.55 net). The average monthly gross earnings in the hospitality industry for August 2012 was €1,101.32 (€750.99 net). According to the trade union for the hospitality and tourism sector of Slovenia (sindikat GIT), total monthly net wages in the sector are under €600,000. People are leaving the underpaid and unappreciated work in the hospitality industry in protest of an increasing amount of work and unpaid overtime (GIT, 2012). Official figures for wages do not include tips and other benefits, as tipping is not a compulsory element of service in Slovenia. According to Raspor (2007), guests on average devote the equivalent of 2.97 per cent of the bill to tipping employees. Although tips serve as an additional source of income, according to Raspor (2009), in Slovenia tips do not represent a tool for increasing employees' retention. Another key problem is the lack of a mandatory minimum requirement for professional qualification in the food service industry. This gap means that human resources management (HRM) presents a special professional challenge for managers of food service businesses.

The key objective of this study was to identify motivators for work in food service and to determine whether money is the main motivator in times of economic crisis. Its purpose is to provide information that will be useful to food service managers in attracting and motivating employees, especially according to employees' demographic characteristics.

2 Literature review

Studies investigating the impacts of the recession on the hospitality industry (Roche et al., 2011; International Labor Organization, 2010; Raspor, 2011; Chraif & Anitei, 2011; Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2012; Maškarin & Jurdana, 2010) were published only after the financial crisis of 2008 (findings are presented below). Preliminary studies (done prior to the recession) suggested that employee satisfaction and productivity mainly derive from the relationship between job tasks (responsibility) and personal (individual) ambition and self-esteem (McCabe, Nowak & Mullen, 2005). Studies have shown that, especially in the hospitality industry, motivation is strongly connected with a feeling of satisfaction resulting from the quality of work performed (Wildes & Parks, 2005). Milman (2002) stated that the retention of employees in the workplace is primarily associated with personal fulfilment and working conditions, rather than with the financial compensation. Wildes (2008) has highlighted the key factors that influence the motivation of employees in the hospitality industry; money, career development, training (further education), social security, fun and flexible working hours. Upchurch et al. (2010), in their

1 SURS (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia).

study on the loyalty of restaurant employees, noted the difficulty of highlighting just one, primary motivating factor, as the satisfaction and motivation of employees in the restaurant business depend on a complex combination of external and internal factors. Overall, the issue of motivation is very complex, which makes it difficult to highlight just one basic cause, which could be identified as "the main culprit" for the lack of employee motivation.

The complexity of the problem in Slovenia is discussed in a comprehensive research project, whose goal was to put in place a modern model of HRM in the field of tourism, and was carried out under the research project Slovenian Competitiveness 2006–2013. The survey covered 235 people working in tourism in the entire territory of Slovenia. Most respondents (82 per cent) were employed at operational (executive) positions, with managers representing 7 per cent and middle and upper management representing 11 per cent of the total sample, respectively. The proportion of employees working in food service was 22.3 per cent of the total sample. The survey showed that employees are generally satisfied with their work, and no significant differences were found in job satisfaction according to gender or age. The research showed that these employees are the most motivated by praise, cooperation and collegiality. The meaning of cooperativeness and collegiality is also debated by Kukanja- Gabrijelčič (2007, 180), who discusses their impact on the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of employees' professional and personal growth and motivation. The survey showed that money does not work as a direct motivator and that employees often do not receive monetary rewards (Lebe et al., 2009). These findings were also supported by Raspor (2009), in a study of work motivators among employees in the Slovenian hospitality and gaming industries. This study found that permanent employment was by far the most important motivator, followed by good relationships, a safe work environment and a good supervisor. Payment (money) was the least important factor.

General studies dealing with motivation in times of crisis have shown show that various crisis situations have a significant impact on peoples' behavioural patterns and values (Brandl & Traxler, 2011; Lane, 2011; Cradle, 2010, Jones et al., 2009, Mintzberg, 2009; Evans, 2008). In particular, job security and financial rewards have been found to be more important motivators in times of recession (David, 2010; Lawler, 2007; Fitzpatrick, 2009).

Relevant studies for the hospitality industry (Roche et al., 2011; International Labor Organization, 2010; Raspor, 2011; Chraif & Anitei, 2011; Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2012; Maškarin & Jurdana, 2010) have stressed the importance of human resources in times of recession. As the financial crisis has led to changes in work practices and a tendency towards staff reduction, examples of best practices show that the best-performing businesses in times of crisis rely on the company's internal potential efficiencies and human resources (human capital). Especially in the hospitality industry, anti-recession measures should primarily focus on improving employees' motivation and sales skills (Maškarin & Jurdana, 2010). Chraif & Anitei (2011) noted that crisis had a positive impact in terms of reducing the counterproductive behaviour of employees. In addition, overtime work can lead to reduced work satisfaction, and organisations must support their employees in order to protect them as much as possible from the effects of crisis. Keeping employees regularly and fully informed of the organisation's position is considered indispensible in maintaining employee commitment and engagement during the adjustment to adverse times (Roche et al., 2011). Although the crisis is global, there are specific effects among different countries. Raspor (2012) pointed out the specific effects of the economic crisis on human resources in the Slovenian hospitality industry. The research has shown a shortage of hospitality and tourism workers in Slovenia, despite the fact that the number of unemployed people registered with the Employment Service has drastically increased during the crisis. Nevertheless, recession not only affects the motivation of employees, but also has a strong influence on the behaviour and motivation of the consumer and of society in general (Laurent, 2011; Flatters & Wilmott, 2009).

3 Motivational theories

Many researchers have studied employee motivation. Uhan (1999) argues that the practice of analysing motivational factors yields the best results when economic motivation is reviewed along with a larger number of external and internal motivational factors. Of many motivational theories, a few in particular are important for our study. Maslow (1954) has stated that people are motivated by the desire to meet needs, which are classified from vital-physiological needs to less urgent needs (self-improvement). Herzberg's theory of motivation or the "two factor" theory holds that people are influenced by two sets of factors — motivator and hygiene factors. McGregor`s theory or the "x-y theory" is based on two extremes of human behaviour. Poter-Lawler's motivational model combines content and process theories. Kovach (1995) has developed a scale of 12 external and internal motivational factors. Finally, Glasser's motivational theory or the "choice theory" states that whatever people do is done to meet their own needs, because motivation is based solely on meeting the needs of the individual, and does not recognise external motivators or a hierarchy of needs (Zadel, 2005).

Five motivational theories unite this research as they apply to the construct of motivation regarding work in food service; equity theory, expectancy theory, attribution theory, relationship theory and the theory of economic motivation.

3.1 Equity theory

The theory of equity or justice (Adams, 1965) is based on fairness in equalizing input and output. Effort or money invested in the work process is balanced against goods or services received. "Input" is everything that an individual invests in the work process; age, experience, skills, knowledge, time, et cetera. If employees find that their ratio of contributions and benefits is unfair and incomparable to that of others who perform similar jobs, they will be dissatisfied and therefore unmotivated to work (Wildes, 2008; Treven, 2001).

3.2 Economic motivation theory

The economic theory of motivation (Taylor, 1911) is based on the assertion that man (as a human being) is an "economic creature" and works in order to earn money and provide material goods. If we analyse this type of motivation, we can see that money is a motivator only as long as it does not become a permanent reward (regular salary). If the reward (earning) is the same every month, it becomes something that has been guaranteed. The influence of money as a motivator also varies significantly for different groups of employees. Money usually works as a motivator for low-paid employees, younger employees and "materialists" (Uhan, 2000).

3.3 Expectancy theory

Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964, cited in Wildes, 2008) assumes that behaviour is a result of conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose is to maximise satisfaction. Employees consciously change their behaviour and motivation to achieve their individual wishes and goals. Employees are motivated if they believe that the effort they make will bring them adequate compensation. The power of motivation is dependant on the extent to which every work effort is expected to be followed by a "fair" outcome (reward, compensation).

3.4 Attribution theory

Attribution theory (Heider, 1958, cited in Wildes, 2008) helps to explain and control potentially unpredictable psychological states of satisfaction, which occur in the workplace and influence the motivation of employees. People act and react according to their principles and expectations, depending on the situation (Schermerhorn, 2001; Wildes, 2008). This theory helps to explain the reasons for behavioural patterns and actions of employees: why people choose to stay at work, why they decide to work in a food service facility, why they praise their employer and so on. For example; a creative bartender who is working under constant s supervision is likely to find work in a more "appropriate" facility and in an environment that allows a sense of freedom and creativity.

3.5 Relationship theory

Relationship or the "marketing" theory (Rychlak, 1984; Berry, 1983, cited in Wildes, 2008) is at once an organisational, structural, managerial, strategic and attitudinal theory. The theory is based on the concept of exchange and is often used in marketing strategies. The key challenge is to attract and retain customers, or in this case, employees. This theory is based on mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises between the seller and buyer or employer and employee (Gronroos, 1990, cited in Wildes, 2008). Recent studies show that the majority of motivation is internal and varies from person to person (Wildes, 2008).

4 State-of-the-art approach to the organisation of food service businesses

In practice, motivational theories cannot be addressed independently (separately), because motivation is directly related to the management and organisation of the food service company (its structure, processes, culture) and the environment in which it operates. Unfortunately, there is no universal model of organisation to ensure the profitability of owners' capital, the motivation of employees and the satisfaction of guests. The success of a company largely depends on understanding the inner organisational processes and the specificity of the environment in which companies operate (Dimovski et al., 2005).

Hospitality and food service companies operate in an unstable and volatile environment that requires organisation based on human resources and individuality, as the possibility of standardised operations is limited. The purpose of the individual approach, both in relation to employees and guests, is to build trust. The relationship based on trust, as a motivational element of the "sensory strategy", provides a feeling of safety, comfort and familiarity to both employees and guests. The basis of the emotional organisation does not reside in standards and automation, but rather in the philosophy and values of the organization (Armistead & Kiely, 2004). Bukh et al. (2005) stressed the importance of a partnership relationship based on trust and loyalty. A partnership relationship induces trust, which is the basic motivator.

5 Methodology

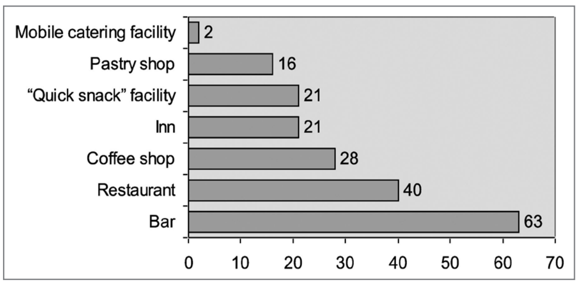
The present survey was conducted in the municipality of Piran in May 2012. The research was conducted using direct interviews with service personnel. For the purpose of this study, server is defined as any male or female employee who interfaces with guests. The sample also included servers working in food service facilities, such as bars and coffee shops, as they often offer various types of food (snacks). Parallel to the interviews, a survey (listing) of food service businesses in the municipality of Piran was compiled, as accurate (practically usable) records did not exist.

Based on previous research (Upchurch et al. 2010; University of Maribor, 2009; Wildes, 2008) key motivational factors (attributes) were listed: money, career development, training / further education, social security, fun and flexible working hours. For the purpose of the study, we wished to examine how important these factors are to food service staff in the municipality of Piran. In addition, we wanted to assess whether these factors are affected by other variables – in particular, demographics. In designing the measurement instrument (questionnaire), we created some of the variables as ordinal and used Likert measurement scales with a neutral value . This enabled us to compare mean values between groups, as we wanted to test the influence of some demographic variables on the importance of motivational factors. To compare the mean values between pairs of groups, we initially planned to use a t-test, but because of its assumption of a normal distribution of variables it could not be applied. Instead, we used the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test, which compares the median rather than arithmetic means. In addition to comparing median values, we decided to verify the bivariate relationship between certain demographic variables and motivational factors and to verify the importance (significance) of motivational factors among themselves. For this purpose we used the Spearman correlation coefficient. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

5.1 Types of food service businesses

The survey covered 191 different types of food service businesses (N = 191), as shown in Figure 1. The most common type was bars, representing one-third of all businesses (33 per cent). Next was the restaurant category, which represented one-fifth of the sample (21 per cent).

Fig. 1: *Food service facilities by type of business*



The facilities typically have fewer than 100 seats, on average slightly fewer than 70 ($\mu = 69.1$), but between different types of facilities the number varies considerably ($\sigma = 55.2$). The average is relatively high, due to several facilities having more than 100 seats (14 per cent). The majority of facilities have two permanent (full-time) employees in service, although the statistical average is relatively higher and indicates an asymmetrical distribution to the right, with a relatively high variability ($\mu = 3.6$, $\sigma = 2.6$). In addition to full-time employees, many facilities employ two seasonal workers or students. The average distribution and dispersion of these are similar to that of full-time employees ($\mu = 3.5$, $\sigma = 3.2$). We found that food service businesses in the municipality of Piran most commonly employ five servers (waiters).

5.2 Profile of respondents

For the purpose of the study, selected servers (one per each facility) were interviewed, so the number of respondents is equal to the number of facilities surveyed (N = 191). The structure of the workforce showed approximately the same proportion of full-time employees (46 per cent) and others (54 per cent) as mentioned above. The sample was completely balanced by the gender of respondents. The age of participants was expected to be rather low. Most often the respondents were aged between 20 and 25 years (42 per cent), and there were very few respondents older than 50 years. Distribution by age is skewed to the right. In accordance with the age of respondents, the education level was most frequently secondary (57 per cent), followed by professional (22 per cent) and higher (17 per cent). Only one respondent held a postgraduate degree (a master's degree) and five respondents had not completed elementary school. Of those who indicated a field of study (17 per cent), only one-third had a professional culinary education. Personal (net) monthly incomes of respondents ranged mostly between €500 and €1,000 (63 per cent), were often less than €500 (26 per cent) but rarely above €1,000 and in just one case more than €1,500[2]. Respondents had on average more than seven years of experience in service ($\mu = 7.2$), but the pattern shows that many of them have a significantly longer or shorter length of experience, which is confirmed by the standard deviation ($\sigma = 6.5$). Only 40 per cent of respondents are prepared to stay in food service in the future, while the remaining 60 per cent would immediately change their careers in the case of a better opportunity.

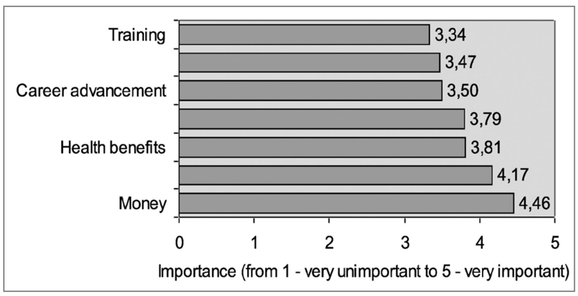
5.3 Motivational factors for working in food service

The importance of motivational factors for working in food service was measured with a five-stage, ordinal Likert-type scale (from 1, very unimportant, to 5, very

2 The reason for this may be that employers often pay only a minimum (mandatory) part of the salary into the employee's bank account, while the difference is paid "by hand". However, in this study we did not examine this and therefore it cannot be stated.

important, with a neutral intermediate level). The importance was in all cases distributed asymmetrically to the left, which was expected, since all factors are at the least somewhat important to all workers. Therefore, we were aware of the differences between the factors and looked at which of them are more important. Figure 2 shows different motivational factors with their arithmetic means, from the least to the most important. Money is the most important motivator (μ = 4.5), followed by flexible working hours (μ = 4.2). The least important motivator is training and further education (μ = 3.3).

Fig. 2: *Motivational factors by importance*



High standard deviations and asymmetric distributions suggested that respondents' opinions are not entirely uniform. Therefore, we decided to check for differences in importance of factors by gender (men compared to women), age (up to 30 and over 30 years of age), education level (up to and including high school, compared with more than high school), personal income (less than €500 compared to €500 or more) and length of work experience (up to seven years, compared with seven years or more). Mainly due to abnormal distributions (more or less asymmetric to the left), we decided to use the Mann-Whitney test. We compared the medians between different paired groups of respondents and checked for any statistically significant differences. The results are shown in Table 1.

We can see that motivational factors showed some statistically significant differences according to different demographic variables (shown in bold in Table 1). Gender had a significant effect on the importance of the factors "money" and "fun": to men "money" and "fun" were less important than to women. Age had a significant effect on the importance of the factors "social security", "fun" and "flexible working hours". To young respondents (up to age 30) "social security" was less important and "fun" and "flexible working hours" were far more important than to respondents over 30 years of age. Education level had a significant effect on the importance of the factors "career development", "training" and "social security". To less educated respondents, "career development", "training" and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, "social security", were far less important than to more educated respondents. Similarly surprising was the impact of personal income on the importance of the factor "social security". To less wealthy respondents, "social security" was far less important than to wealthier ones. The factor "work experience" had a significant effect on the importance of "career development", "training", "social security" and "fun". To less experienced respondents, "career

Table 1: *Differences in the importance of motivational factors by gender, age, education, income and work experience*

Motivator	Gender		Age		Education		Income		Work experience	
	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig.
Money	3,664	0.014	3,615	0.258	2,376	0.223	3,061	0.947	3,822	0.642
Career advancement	4,329	0.709	3,547	0.226	2,198	0.087	2,742	0.252	3,385	0.090
Training	4,259	0.573	3,581	0.268	1,740	0.001	2,787	0.323	3,397	0.098
Health benefits	4,320	0.782	2,995	0.005	2,019	0.020	2,035	0.001	3,017	0.006
Fun place to work	3,528	0.018	2,929	0.004	2,489	0.711	2,754	0.494	3,337	0.077
Flexible hours	4,090	0.344	2,825	0.001	2,636	0.902	2,875	0.619	3,746	0.565

development", "training" and "social security" were less important than to more experienced respondents. Additionally, we were interested in the strength of the links between motivational factors and demographic variables. We expected that certain motivational factors would be primarily associated with age, as well as with the education, experience and income of respondents. To this end, we calculated the Spearman correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows the correlation matrix between the importance of motivational factors and demographic variables.

As the limit of statistical significance, we decided to take into account all risk levels under 10 per cent (indicated in bold in Table 2). The most statistically significant relationship was that between personal income and the "social security" factor. Although it is the strongest relationship found, however, it can also be understood as a weak one. If anything, we can undoubtedly claim that the higher the salary is, the more important a respondent rates "social security" as a motivating factor. It is equally surprising as the earlier detection of differences between groups in terms of "social security". Other noteworthy links are between the age of respondents and the ascribed importance of "fun" and "flexible working hours" (the older they are, the less important "fun" and "flexible working hours" are), age and "social security" (to older workers, "social security" is more important), work experience and "social security" (to the more experienced, "social security" is more important) and "education" and "training" (the more educated respondents are, the more important "training" is). Other statistically significant relationships are very weak and do not merit discussion. Finally, we checked the consistency among the motivational variables with the Spearman correlation coefficient (Table 3).

Table 2: *Relationship between the importance of motivational factors and demographic variables*

Motivator	Age		Work experience		Income		Education	
	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.
Money	-0.06	0.439	0.02	0.777	0.05	0.517	-0.04	0.621
Career advancement	0.08	0.270	0.04	0.587	0.15	0.042	0.03	0.631
Training	0.05	0.501	0.04	0.546	0.12	0.097	0.19	0.008
Health benefits	0.21	0.004	0.22	0.002	0.30	0.000	0.17	0.016
Fun place to work	-0.27	0.000	-0.15	0.038	0.05	0.526	0.06	0.438
Flexible hours	-0.18	0.015	-0.12	0.095	0.06	0.454	0.04	0.543

Table 3: *Spearman correlation matrix between the importance of motivational factors*

Motivator		Career advancement	Training	Health benefits	Fun	Flexible hours
Money	**r**	0.22	0.06	0.19	0.22	0.22
	Sig.	0.003	0.392	0.010	0.002	0.002
Career advancement	**r**		0.67	0.34	0.22	0.05
	Sig.		0.000	0.000	0.003	0.495
Training	**r**			0.46	0.26	0.02
	Sig.			0.000	0.000	0.832
Health benefits	**r**				0.13	0.09
	Sig.				0.077	0.200
Fun	**r**					0.39
	Sig.					0.000

Here, some slightly more powerful connections can be seen, although still only moderate or weak. Among the strongest correlations we found are those between "training" and "career development" (the more important "training" is to a respondent, the more important "career development" is), "social security" and "training" (the more important "social security" is to a respondent, the more important "training" is), "flexibility of working hours" and "fun" (the more important "flexible hours" are to a respondent, the more important "fun" is) and "social security" and "career development" (the more important "social security" is to a respondent, the more important "career development" is).

6 Discussion

Research results show that in times of economic crisis money is the most important factor motivating people to work in food service in the municipality of Piran, followed by flexible working hours and social security. Previous research (Raspor, 2009; Lebe et al., 2009) showed that money was not an important motivator. The training factor at this time is very low ranked, which is in some ways understandable – although this finding reflects the low ambitions of employees, which in turn contributes to the low evaluation of the food service profession in society. In general, we can conclude that in times of recession money is the best motivator. In our more detailed analysis, we found some significant differences in motivational factors between different demographic groups. The motivational factor of money was far more important to women than to men. Younger employees were mostly motivated by fun and flexible working hours, while older employees highly valued social security. To more educated and experienced employees, career development and training were more important than to less educated, less experienced employees.

Furthermore, the correlation between different variables was shown to be rather weak, as was the comparison between different groups. Again, it was surprising that the more affluent respondents are, the more important social security is ranked as a motivational factor. Quite expected was the negative correlation between age and "fun", as well as between age and flexible working hours. Young people are understandably more interested in "fun" and having flexible working hours. Additionally, the relationship between these two factors is confirmed by a positive correlation between the importance of flexible working hours and having fun. It is also important to note the positive correlation between the factors "training" and "career development". The importance of training can, therefore, be associated with the importance of a successful career, as employees' pursuit of higher education is driven by a desire for personal progress and professional assertion. We can conclude that by adjusting their activities to strengthen the effectiveness of motivational factors in attracting and retaining certain demographic groups, employers can achieve greater motivation among employees. For example, the motivation of younger employees requires a different approach from the motivation of older employees. Similarly, a targeted approach to motivation is needed according to gender, education and other characteristics. Demographic and other individual priorities and characteristics are the key factors in understanding the motivation of different groups of employees. Based on the results of our study, we can confirm the general opinion that food service employment is dominated by young people who consider themselves to be temporarily employed while waiting for better job opportunities. It is also important to note that motivational factors do not have the same effects in different environments, under different conditions and at different times, as demonstrated in other studies, previously mentioned in the text.

7 Conclusion and managerial implications

Work in the food service industry certainly presents a job opportunity in times of crisis. And although many employees may have planned a different career, a certain proportion of employees find this job to be a permanent one. Research has shown that in times of economic crisis money is the most important motivating factor for all groups of employees. This finding is consistent with the theory of choice, that stresses the importance of an "incentive-based" approach: individuals are primarily motivated by factors that address the needs that are most important to them. We recommend that employers selectively and intensively promote the benefits of employment in the food service industry to different groups of employees. In collaboration with various stakeholders that address the employability of the workforce (e.g. the economic ministry, employment offices, school system), employers should pursue a selective and targeted strategy of actively promoting the food service professions. The motivation of different groups of employees must be encouraged using different motivational factors. Because the importance of different motivational factors varies across different contexts, it is recommended to carry out similar research in different environments, with different groups (profiles) of employees, and to ensure the research is periodically repeated.

Vpliv gospodarske krize na motivacijo za delo v strežbi: primer občine Piran

Povzetek

Študija obravnava motivacijske dejavnike strežnega osebja za delo v gostinstvu, s pomočjo katerih menedžerji gostinskih podjetij lažje pritegnejo, zadržijo in motivirajo zaposlene. Raziskava je bila izvedena na območju občine Piran. Občina Piran je turistično najbolj razvita slovenska občina in najpomembnejše turistično središče v severnem Sredozemlju. Ključni cilj raziskave je bil ugotoviti najpomembnejše motivacijske dejavnike, zaradi katerih se zaposleni odločajo za delo v gostinstvu (strežbi), ter ugotoviti, ali je v času gospodarske krize denar prevladujoči motivacijski dejavnik. Anketiranci so morali izpostaviti šest ključnih motivacijskih dejavnikov za delo v gostinstvu. Ugotovitve kažejo, da je denar daleč največji motivacijski dejavnik za opravljanje dela, ostali dejavniki pa so močno povezani s starostjo zaposlenih in vrsto gostinskega obrata, v katerem zaposleni delajo. Motivacijske teorije, ki podpirajo atributivne pristope in temeljijo na teoriji izbire, so podrobneje predstavljene v raziskavi. V zaključku so podana praktična navodila za menedžerje gostinskih podjetij, kako selektivno pritegniti in motivirati različne skupine zaposlenih v različnih gostinskih obratih.

Ključne besede: gostinstvo, strežba, motivacija, recesija, občina Piran

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original scientific article

Gastronomy heritage as a source of development for gastronomy tourism and as a means of increasing Slovenia's tourism visibility

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Abstract

Since gaining its independence in 1991, the Republic of Slovenia has seen greatly increased interest in cultural heritage and the identity of cities and especially villages. Almost every village sees its future in the development of tourism based on local heritage and identity, in a variety of ethnographic, ethnological, folklore, and cultural events and festivals. Local gastronomy specialties are becoming an integral part of tourism. But Slovenia's history is seasoned with a romantic, nostalgic and uncritical attitude to our cultural heritage. It is presented as an idyllic memory of the beautiful and unforgettable lives of our predecessors. A significant improvement in quality took place in the period after Slovenia joined the EU (2004), as international tourists started to view Slovenia as a forgotten, hidden jewel of Europe, or rather as cultural Europe in miniature. Our rich and diversified heritage in gastronomy and wine-making, in modern form, are becoming an increasingly important medium of international tourism visibility. The proliferation of innovative culinary and wine festivals represents the fastest growing trend in heritage tourism. Slovenia is the meeting point of the Alps, the Mediterranean and the Pannonian Plain. This is clearly mirrored in the country's gastronomy and in the Gastronomic Strategy of Slovenia (2006) listing 24 gastronomic regions of Slovenia with 140 representative dishes. Such a gastronomic platform influences the content of food and wine events and festivals, and contributes to the international gastronomy and tourism visibility of the country.

Key words: cultural heritage, gastronomy heritage, gastronomy culture, food events, wine events, festivals, gastronomy tourism, heritage tourism

1 Introduction: At the crossroad of European cultures

In gastronomia veritas?

Even the ancient Romans were aware of the saying "we are what we eat." Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are like, who your neighbours and friends are, what your habits are like (Bogataj, 1992, 178). More and more we are what we eat, not just in the physical sense, but also because we identify ourselves with certain types of cuisine we encounter on holidays (Richards, 2002, 3). This thought confirms the fact that at a time of globalisation and cultural uniformity, the heritage of gastronomy and modern gastronomy creativity are the vital co-creators of national identity, together with regional and local specialities. As such, they are perceived as strategic "spices" seasoning tourism development, in particular gastronomy, heritage and cultural tourism, in spite of the fact that, according to Cameron, heritage is an unnatural phenomenon that derives from the past and represents a fairly recent stock of culture (Cameron, 2010, 203).

Gastronomy is not only extremely difficult to define, but like culture, the term has become more heavily laden over time (Richards, 2002, 3). The word "gastronomy" denotes culinary heritage as well as modern culinary creativity, wine heritage, and present wine creativity. It may be perceived as a cross-section, or meeting point, of culinary art and oenology, or even of food and wine (drinks), or beverages in general. Oeno-gastronomy is perceived as part of gastronomy and in the relationship between wine culture and nutrition culture it puts emphasis on wine. Gastronomy may also be perceived as the art of cooking (Verbinc, 1979, 232), or rather as the art of selecting, preparing, serving and enjoying fine food (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2000) and drinks. The area of gastronomy is interdisciplinary and, as such, is the subject of basic and applicative research in various scientific disciplines, together with practical knowledge and skills. In order to foster the research of food and drink festivals, special methods have been developed (Lyons, 2008).

It seems necessary to point out the differentiation between food tourism and wine tourism. Food tourism is defined as visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and specific locations for which food tasting and/orw experiencing the attributes of specialist food production regions are the primary motivating factors for travel (Hall, Mitchell, in: Hall, Sharpels, 2008, 5). Wine tourism is a subset of food tourism defined as visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of grape wine regions are the prime motivating factors for visitors (Hall in: Hall, Sharples, 2008, 5).

From a tourism point of view, gastronomy may be considered as an inseparable culturological and biological component, since food and drink are not only essential human needs, including tourist needs, but represent also the motive for gastronomy-motivated travels. The process of generating gastronomy perfumes in tourism depends on the essence of the tourism experience, social and financial status, education and age, as well as on the conscious decision as to what type of tourist, provider or consumer, we aim to be.

Our everyday way of life and habits of celebration confirm the well-known fact that in terms of taste we tend to be most conservative. The soup my mother or even my grandmother prepared may still set the standard for the home-made Sunday meal beef stock. All other soups are mere failed attempts that are of worse taste, no matter how good they actually taste. Homemade food evaluation, in general not professionally acceptable, may be carried out solely in the home environment and as such is subjective and stereotyped. In other words, there are as many homemade beef stocks as there are families.

Leaving the premises of the home kitchen we find ourselves at the level of local culture, and gastronomy culture becomes the micro definition of the former. It seems to be an extract with a local community soul and a mirror to its micro cosmos. Understanding local food and beverages enables us to understand the very soul of the nation, as the 19th century Romantics and the 21st century Neo-romantics would put it. Through an intimate relationship with ingredients, preparation and consummation of food, the soul of the nation reveals itself, and this we would like to capture and offer to a modern tourist. Anthropo-geographers remind us of the environmental and natural influences on human characteristics, and even more on gastronomy. When attempting to understand the taste of air-cured ham from Karst, we encounter also the local wine "Teran", the cultural heritage and natural attractions of Karst, and also the specific way of life and the culture of the inhabitants ("Krašovci"). Planning the whole gastronomy experience in tourism leads us to interdisciplinary and holistic research. A more holistic approach to studying tourism and gastronomy can take different epistemological positions and disciplinary perspectives into account (Hjalager, Richards, 2002, 233). The strength and meaning of a holistic understanding of gastronomy in tourism do not focus solely on the ingredients offered on the plate and in the glass, but also on rational and emotional pleasures and the whole experience of the ambience, nature and people. This means gastronomy culture in the broadest sense of the word "culture".

"We used to eat in order to live, today we live to eat" the gourmets may think, considering the aforementioned culture one of the priorities of their lives. The resulting question may be how this gastronomy dogma, in the positive meaning of the word, may be transferred to the field of tourism. In the typology of added value, in gastronomy there are four stages of expected tourist behaviour: 1 – enjoy the food, 2 – understand the food, 3 – experience the food, 4 – exchange knowledge about the food (Hjalager, 2002, 33). First we have to get acquainted with the heritage, and then we frequently have to understand and accept it. Only after we have done this may we continue by exploring the creativity of new culinary treasures (Bogataj 1992, 178). This may lead us to the discovery of gastronomy perfumes that are not only smelled, but also tasted.

Gastronomy perfumes as a metaphor build sensual interactive relationships among colour, smell, taste and image. In this way, gastronomy experience is created. At a time of globalisation such wine and culinary perfumes bring us to regional cultures and local specialities. The authentic, as the antipode to the universal, proves the importance of the inclusion of the heritage of gastronomy in contemporary gastronomy creativity and culture. In this way we leave the universal and massive and enter the domain of the traditional and boutique. Aggressive, uniform and standardised fast food globalism encourages us to intensify research into local and regional gastronomy specialities and promote their inclusion in heritage and any other type of tourism (Bogataj, 2008, 9).

As perfume is traditionally kept in small bottles, Slovenia as a country is geographically small, but by no means culturologically poor. The more the world becomes globalised, the more the interest in local cultures increases, in the opinion of global megatrend futurists (Naisbitt, Aburdene, 1990). Cultural and natural diversity result in gastronomy diversity, perceived as an opportunity for international acknowledgement and enhanced visibility for the country.

Lying between the Alps, the Mediterranean and the Pannonian Plain, and embracing all the beauties of the Old Continent, Slovenia has recognisable geographical and ethnological regions and food cultures (Lysaght, 2002, 13). Its status as a crossroads, or better, a meeting point of European cultural, economic and political paths may be attributed to the uniqueness of Slovene gastronomy heritage. Bogataj sees proof of this in the wide range of dishes of the predominantly rural population throughout history, their habits and traditions, all types of economic endeavours, interpersonal relationships, and creativity. The same goes for the urban population, town inhabitants, counts, miners in mining areas, those behind the monastery walls, and everywhere else. The author also points out that dishes were not merely imitations of foreign recipes, but also contributions to those environments, adaptations, and tests to determine whether they may fit their own cultures and ways of life (Lebe et al., 2006, 10).

The second phenomenon is not connected to personal or family experience. At the regional and national level we may speak of outstanding creativity in the field of gastronomy, whether in the variations in the preparation of authentic local dishes, or in the acceptance of "world cuisine" and dishes in the local environment, as in the case of pizza (Gomzi Praprotnik, 2007, 138–140) or traditional "burek" (traditional pie with various fillings) (Stojanovic, 2007, 192–196).

2 Methodology and methods

Culinary heritage and culture in Slovenian tourism is a relatively new area of interest for researchers. This is reflected in the lack of scientific articles in the field of gastronomy tourism. Numerous studies are divided among specific topics or segments of gastronomy heritage and culture at the local, regional and national level. Therefore, the need for a comprehensive scientific article focused on the past and the future of gastronomy tourism is more than evident. The basic research questions are related to the analysis of the interactions between gastronomy and tourism and to policies and strategies for culinary heritage and culture based gastronomy tourism. To understand the opportunities in the field of gastronomy tourism, we have to understand its heritage and cultural context, our gastronomy identity, as well as contemporary trends in gastronomy and gastronomy tourism.

The methodological approach in the present article is based on the methodology of ethnology and heritology and on the theory of gastronomy tourism, where the focus is on the historical and heritage perspectives. This represents an information and research platform for understanding the heritage of gastronomy and its contemporary forms. The research was conducted using several methods, such as: methods of selection, analysis and interpretation of historical sources and literature (ethnological, heritological, gastronomy and tourism) and an analysis of national gastronomy strategy and trends in the field of gastronomy tourism. Also used is the special method of fieldwork research – personal observation with participation - especially in the case of the analysis of food and wine events and festivals in Slovenia. Research establishes a link between heritage and modernity. Three basic heritological functions (protection, research, communication) are upgraded to include a fourth function: development. In the case of research this means that in the heritage we are looking for alternatives for tourism development. The research is focused on the history, the present time, and especially the future: on innovative forms of integration of gastronomy heritage into gastronomy tourism.

3 Research context

The basic research questions are related to the determination of the position of gastronomy in tourism by detecting strategic fields in culinary tourism, and by identifying the communicational power of gastronomy tourism in enhancing the country's international visibility. In the research context it is necessary, first of all, to discover, to select and to analyse basic historical sources important to understanding the heritage of gastronomy in Slovenia. We have to integrate them with contemporary studies on gastronomy tourism. Without the analysis and use of historical sources, we can't understand the Gastronomic Strategy of Slovenia and gastronomic pyramid, which establish the basis identity of the gastronomy regions in Slovenia and the hierarchy of typical dishes and drinks in each. The gastronomic strategy and gastronomic pyramid represent the historical and contemporary platform on which we could build innovative forms of tourism and gastronomy integration.

The research exposes some of the very important fields of gastronomy tourism as well as a few selected examples, such as food and wine events and festivals. This is a contemporary phenomenon in connection with the festival expansion in Slovenia, especially in the field of heritage and gastronomy. The importance of thematic and cultural routes as opportunities for a holistic tourism experience, where gastronomy can become a promoter and creator of tourism development and of integral tourism services and products, is emphasized. The last part of the research is focused on determining whether gastronomy could become an important innovative medium in enhancing our international tourism visibility. Our primary aim has been to determine if gastronomy heritage and culture might be a sufficient or suitable basis for the development of a modern and innovative gastronomy tourism.

3.1 Heritage and culture of food and wine in Slovenia

When discussing the heritage of Slovenia's gastronomy and its possible applications in tourism, four historic personalities have to be mentioned: Janez Vajkard Valvasor, Valentin Vodnik, Felicita Kalinšek, and France Prešeren.

A presentation of life, gastronomy and tourism in Slovenia at the end of the 17th century, is found in the monumental literary work "The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola" (1689) by the polymath baron Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1641–1693). Valvasor still inspires with his descriptions and depictions of gastronomy culture, including dormice trapping and fishing in the mystic intermittent Lake Cerknica. He also describes the food eaten by gentry and ordinary inhabitants of towns in the land called Kranjska, viticulture and wine transport by land and rivers. Some images of life in Istra (Istria) have been documented, commercially used, and exhibited by Vina Koper, one of the largest and in terms of tourism most communicative major wine cellars in Slovenia. Valvasor's book of 3532 pages and 528 drawings is an invaluable source for research and heritage interpretation, but has unfortunately so far not been used to its full potential. This is because, on the one hand, classic historical research has not paid due attention to application, innovation and modernity, while on the other hand, the tourism industry has not been fully aware of the meaning and strength of traditions in contemporary tourism planning – the cornerstone of sustainable tourism. Heritage tourism could be a symbol and presentation based on cultural heritage and natural attractions, as tourism development potentials, according to several authors who discuss its history and definition (Timothy, 2011, 2–6; Christou, 2006, 5–8 and others).

In the year 1799 the pastor, poet, teacher and newspaper writer Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819) published the first cook book in the Slovene language, translated from German, entitled Cook Book (Kuharske bukve) . It established the previously almost unknown dishes, ingredients, and principles of a healthy diet. Vodnik, who himself was not a good cook, wanted to pass on his inspiration and enlightenment to Slovenes. He also introduced Slovene translations of commonly used German terms. His descriptions of more than 300 dishes are considered culinary treasures for contemporary gastronomy creativity. On the 210th anniversary of the first edition of the Cook Book, Otočec Castle (Relais & Châteaux Hotel), hosted a meeting of Slovene members of the international gastronomy association, Chaîne des Rôtisseurs (1248–1950). The evening was dedicated to Vodnik in the contemporary edition. On offer were such dishes as pike with horseradish, served with green peas and cream, steamed pigeon with steamed carrots and other vegetables, quince gelatine, and chestnut cake. Since then, revitalised dishes have been increasingly important in tourism and gastronomy at the castle and are considered exclusive regional specialities.

Magdalena Pleiweis, (Knafelj by marriage), (1815–1890), was the author and publisher of the first authentic Slovene cook book. In the year 1868 she published the bestseller entitled Slovene Cook Book or Instructions for Cooking Delicious, Ordinary and Remarkable Dishes (Slovenska kuharica ali navod okusno kuhati navadna in imenitna jedila). By 1902 it had run to five editions, and has now reached 28. It was supplemented and updated by the Slovene nun, Sister Felicita, Terezija Kalinšek (1865–1937). Later the same work was done by the cooking teacher and bishop's cook Vandelina Ilc (1916–2003), better known as Sister Vandelina. The book, slightly supplemented and updated, is considered the cornerstone of Slovene culinary identity, and is still in use. From a heritage tourism point of view, it is underused in the promotion of Slovene gastronomy, particularly in the hospitality and hotel industries.

The most publicised Slovene poet, France Prešeren (1800–1849), wrote the poem The Toast (Zdravljica) in 1845. It is dedicated to the wine vine and the Slovene nation. It became extremely popular among common people, who sung it when drinking wine, and was almost obligatory when proposing a toast. It has been covered by numerous choirs and even adapted by rock musicians. According to Article 6 of the Slovene Constitution, the Parliament on 27/9/1989 pronounced the poem the national anthem. It is a cultural and gastronomic curiosity to have such an anthem in Europe. It has international potential for the promotion of heritage tourism and Slovene wine culture. A verse from The Toast is written also on the Slovene two-euro coin.

Most Slovene gastronomy knowledge and potential is found in the countryside, where social participation in tourism is well developed. The Tourist Association of Slovenia, founded in 1905, has played a major role in the protection and promotion of gastronomy heritage, development of Slovene gastronomy culture, and its popularisation throughout the entire Slovene territory. The association connects more than 629 tourism organisations, 30 municipal and regional organisations, more than 200 junior organisations, and 85 tourism information centres. Considering the fact that Slovenia has a population of 2 million spread across 211 municipalities, this seems impressive. It has to be pointed out that the tourism association has joint programmes with the National Education Bard and National Board for Cultural Heritage, and that it is the cofounder of the Slovene Tourism Organisation (Slovenske turistične organizacije), the umbrella organisation for the promotion and marketing of Slovene tourism.

The Tourist Association of Slovenia has an accessible, appealing and popular slogan: "Tourism is people". It is readily understood, used to mobilise people, and seems to be the most often cited slogan in Slovene tourism. Considering the needs of contemporary tourism as an important and influential global industry, it may be perceived as overly romantic and frequently inappropriate, particularly due to the fact that the innovative development of tourism does not require only interest and goodwill, but also knowledge. In the field of heritage tourism, including contemporary

Fig. 1: *Exhibition "Delights of Slovene farms". Ptuj, 2008.*

Source: Author.

gastronomy endeavours, knowledge of local specialities and the knowledge of local tourism organisation members in the areas of ethnography, ethnology, and folklore, are invaluable.

In 1991 Slovenia gained independence. This led to increasing interest in local traditions and today almost no village ignores heritage as a major motive for tourism development. This has encouraged the formation of organisations in the rural areas and resulted in the boom in events and celebrations based on local cultural heritage. Most local festivities and celebrations tend to be closely connected to gastronomy, whether these be r local, such as the celebration of onion in the village of Moškanjci, regional, such as the celebration of air-cured ham and the local wine Teran in Karst, or national, such as the Delights of Slovene farms in Ptuj. Consequently, the Tourist Associaton of Slovenia has published a brochure cataloguing these events entitled Experience Slovenia (2011). There are numerous events, some of them offering gastronomy as the main attraction, for instance the Day of Beans in the village Hrovača, and others offering gastronomy as one of several attractions at a more complex local event, such as the Wheat Gathering Festival with its exhibition of breads and pies in the village of Polenšak. Many of them have become traditional and with a limited impact on tourism. They target primarily the local and regional populations, and from a national promotion point of view seem too introverted and self-sufficient. However, from a heritage tourism trend perspective, events of this type helped by newly acquired professional knowledge may become an important link in the chain of gastronomy events and festivals in the future.

In 2004 Slovenia joined the EU as "an enigma to Europeans and challenge for Slovenians" (Smerdel, 2002). The inhabitants of the EU have since been discovering Slovenia as an unknown destination offering gastronomy heritage as an increasingly important attraction. The local and the regional have suddenly become internationally interesting and important. This has resulted in the systematic and creative international promotion and marketing of Slovene gastronomy and the proliferation of food and wine events and festivals.

3.2 The Gastronomic Strategy of Slovenia – promotion of gastronomy and the country

Since the 1980s, numerous good quality professional and popular books have been published in Slovenia shedding light on gastronomy, its components and the field itself, from the point of view of various sciences, disciplines and non-professional endeavours. Nevertheless, there have not been many professional attempts to connect the culinary arts and oenology with tourism. Therefore the Gastronomic Strategy of Slovenia represents a new and very important factor in the systematic planning of gastronomy development and promotion, considering the needs of Slovene tourism at the local, regional, national and international levels alike. Gastronomy is expected to contribute to better recognisability of Slovenia as a tourism destination (Lebe et al., 2006, 5).

Activities organised by the Tourist Association of Slovenia between 1999 and 2000 under the banner Slovene Culinary Art and Wine in Tourism, encouraged each of Slovenia's regions to present its culinary treasures. Considerable attention was paid to education; secondary schools of hospitality and tourism in their programmes emphasized the importance of Slovene traditional food. Progress was noticed in the groups of women from local farms who organised local events promoting cultural, historic and heritage themes. The aim of the activities was also to encourage the owners of traditional Slovene restaurants ("gostilne"), to give priority to Slovene or traditional dishes. At the same time it was emphasized that the coordination and management of Slovene wine and fruit roads was inadequate. The lack of professional knowledge hindered the endeavours and resulted in Slovene gastronomy being seen as incomplete and unrecognisable by tourists.

The Strategy of Slovene Tourism Marketing (2003–2006) of the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) acknowledged the importance of the development and marketing of Slovene gastronomy products, increasingly important in the process of tourism destination development. Prior to that, gastronomy had not been systematically developed and promoted (Pak, 2007, 124–125). "Delightful Food & Wine" has been one of nine brands and marketed products in Slovene tourism since 2003 and has become an indispensable element of Slovenia's tourism offer. It has been joined by the best Slovene wine producers and chefs. Since then gastronomy has become an indispensable means for promoting Slovenia at tourism fairs worldwide, particularly in Europe. It has been managed by STB, which has acted as the meeting point and centre of the complex web of Slovene tourism, developing its coordinating and connecting role between the public, private and civil company. It is the marketing, information and analytical centre of tourism, using up-to-date methods, approaches and tools when globally marketing Slovenia's tourism offer. Gastronomy has finally been recognised as an international means of promoting tourism and country. It is also becoming a heritage tourism component and part of strategic tourism communication, calling for a huge promotional budget for innovative positioning of Slovenia's gastronomy within the country and in the world.

STB in 2006 published the Gastronomic Strategy of Slovenia in order to promote the development and marketing of Slovenia's gastronomy. It led to the implementation of measures for gastronomy development and promotion in compliance with Slovene tourism development and marketing policy. It aims to increase the recognisability of Slovenia by offering gastronomy as one of the nine primary tourism products, promoted under the umbrella of STB (Pak, 2007, 122).

Contemporary Slovenia's culinary is a synthesis of exceptional heritage, various innovations, and the influences of several eras of history and regional geography and environment. For research purposes the dishes were divided into the following groups:
authentic, regional dishes,
Slovene dishes (national dishes),
Mediterranean cuisine dishes,
grilled dishes,
dishes of Middle European cuisine (Lebe et al., 2006, 14–17).

The elements of the SWOT analysis of Slovenia's gastronomy relevant to the present article (Lebe et al., 2006, 25–27) are:

1. One of the strengths to be emphasized is the variety in Slovene cuisine and the variety of authentic regional dishes found within short distances of each other and conditioned by geographical variety. There are several tourism events offering gastronomy as an attraction that are generally well attended.
2. One of the weaknesses is the fact that gastronomy development has been hindered by numerous conservative providers and their unwillingness to innovate, take risks and educate consumers. Even when a new dish, such as a typically regional one, is offered on the menu, it is rapidly removed if it does not become popular in a short period of time. Therefore it is not surprising that in the businesses where Slovene dishes are offered they are in the minority.
3. The organisation of various theme programmes and events connected with the culinary arts offers opportunity for exposure to various target groups of potential customers, as does cooperation with STO in the promotion of Slovenia as a culturally interesting destination by including gastronomy.
4. Threats include uncritical transfer of foreign and fashionable recipes to the Slovene environment, and replacing the Slovene national cuisine on the menus. There is also a lack of knowledge of authentic Slovene regional dishes and as a result a lack of interest in them by customers, due to the lack of emphasis placed on domestic gastronomy. Therefore the younger generation is slowly losing this element of their identity.

It is emphasized that when connecting gastronomy and Slovenia's tourism, the inclusion of gastronomy offers to even the smallest country or region an opportunity to present those of its specialities considered most competitively advantageous and interesting to customers. They are summarised in the following eight points (Lebe et al., 2006, 47–49):

1. development of the palette of locally typical gastronomy products with an emphasis on organic ingredients,
2. preservation of local specialities, development of gastronomy identity and the protection of produce, products and recipes,
3. creation of culinary theme and oenology inspired events,
4. encouragement of culinary individualism and specialisation,
5. introduction of systematic evaluation comparable to established European classification systems for the evaluation of hospitality businesses offering food and beverages,
6. presentation of Slovenia's culinary and gastronomy heritage in European and other foreign handbooks and printed matter,
7. improvement of Slovenia's gastronomy reputation and creation of quality brochures,
8. promotion of Slovenia's gastronomy abroad.

The purpose of the strategy is clearly to connect Slovenia's gastronomy with tourism. If in the year 2006 this may have been referred to just as a strategic development document, it may be said that the mentioned strategy in many points manages to achieve the goals set forth. Today priority is given to regional and local cuisines that have replaced the national ones. As a matter of fact, the national cuisines may be considered as their sum total (Bogataj, 2007, 8).

Gastronomic pyramid

The system of the pyramid used to promote such European countries as Germany, Italy, Hungary, France, and Russia has again proved to be extremely useful and efficient. It is simple, clear and easy to understand to individuals of different educational backgrounds in the hospitality and tourism industries. This may be of strategic importance for the holistic development of gastronomy in tourism.

One of Slovenia's gastronomy treasures we have already mentioned is the unbelievable variety of different dishes and wines. It is worth mentioning that there are over 100 types of soup, more than 100 types of "štruklji"(pastry with different fillings, cooked in boiling water), over 100 dishes with buck wheat as the main ingredient, and more than 50 types of "potica"(traditional cake with different fillings, such as walnut or poppy seeds), to mention only a few (Kuhar, 1998, 9–18). Slovenia s gastronomy development strategy from the year 2006 lists 23 gastronomic regions in Slovenia and 170 representative dishes, recognised for their consistent and unique offerings. The research was carried out in 1,200 traditional Slovene pubs called "gostilna", restaurants, hotels, tourism farms, cafeterias and bistros.

The pyramid consists of three segments:

1. The bottom segment is the broadest and represents the culinary and gastronomic heritage and all the contemporary innovations, including foreign gastronomy influences. It comprises all businesses in Slovenia that are linked to gastronomy, regardless of cuisine origin.
2. The middle segment consists of the most recognisable dishes of Slovenia's individual regions. The dishes are typical and representative of the individual regions and are supposed to be offered in the businesses specialising in the traditional cuisine of their region.
3. The top segment consists of select dishes and wines that best represent Slovenia's gastronomy. They represent the specific and recognisable gastronomy of Slovenia (Lebe et al., 2006, 95–101).

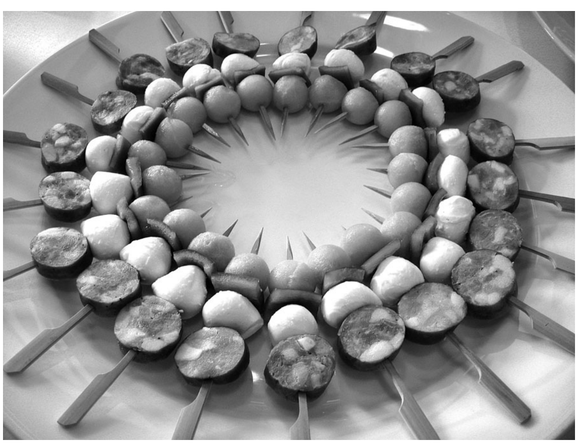
With a view to promoting gastronomy in tourism, the strategy puts emphasis on the second and third segments, upon which we base the national and international promotion of Slovenia's tourism. The authors of the strategy took into account not only the originality of the dishes and wines, and the ingredients, such as meat, fish, grains and flour, but also the visual appeal of individual dishes. This is important for further applications in the promotion of Slovenia's gastronomy in tourism.

- Slovenia's gastronomy is thus represented by the following representative dishes and wines:
- the Mediterranean area offers grilled fish, pilchards, and shellfish, mussels; wines, such as "teran, refošk, rebula, zelen, vitovska grganja, klarnica",
- the Alpine area offers a typical sausage called, "kranjska klobasa" (kranj sausage) and the alcoholic drink made of honey called, "kranjska medica" (honey spirit) or "medeno vino" (honey wine),
- the Panonnian area offers deserts such as "prekmurska gibanica" (cake of the layers of grated apples, poppy seeds, cottage cheese and walnuts) special festive bread called "pletenica" or "bosman"; and the wines šipon and ranina,
- the central part of Slovenia offers "potica", particularly the types with tarragon or honey, crackling, or partly walnut filling, "sirovi štruklji" (pastry filled with cottage cheese and boiled); and the wines "cviček" and "metliška črnina".

The authors of the strategy made the following suggestions to STB in order to improve the quality of the present gastronomy promotion, publish the image brochure of Slovenia's culinary arts and wines, and to include the following:

- Slovenia's gastronomy pyramid,
- Slovenian wines,
- individual regional dishes with their histories,
- several regional pairs in three possible variants,
- regional ingredients,
- events which include Slovenian gastronomy (Lebe et al., 2006, 118).

Fig. 2: *Fashionable offer of "kranjska" saussage. Festival of kranjska sausage. Sora, 2009.*



Source: Author.

The strategy correctly points out that each traditional or regional dish may be prepared in three ways:

1. by strictly adhering to tradition,
2. by modifying tradition in accordance with the expectations and lifestyles of the modern era, for instance in the manner of "slow food", vegetarian food, prevention diet food, low calorie food, smaller portions, and so forth,
3. boldly and innovatively, in order to upgrade regional gastronomy tradition, with only vague reference to the heritage, although the dishes have to retain their fundamental identity and relation to heritage (Lebe et al., 2006, 46).

"Kranjska klobasa" (kranjska sausage) is often mentioned as an example of the last type. In the past it was the staple diet of workers, whereas today it has been upgraded to the highest level of gastronomy, served at business and protocol events, and recently described in its own monograph (Bogataj, 2011). It may be prepared:

- classically, boiled and served with mustard, horseradish and a traditional bun called "žemlja",

- fashionably, with slices of grilled kranjska sausage in "teran" wine, served with baked "polenta" (maize mash),

- boldly, with the sausage served as a desert with ice cream (Lebe et al., 2006, 46).

Although bold approaches to the preparation of dishes are necessary and legitimate, chefs remind us to be cautious. According to Sanchez Romera, his formula for good cooking is amazingly simple: awaken interest in eaters! Lead their brains gently astray, without confusing them! Every cook can make ice cream from Pigs' trotters, which is a gimmick. The eater cannot say whether it is good or bad, because he lacks benchmarks. Making it simple, that's complicated

(Zipprick, 2012, 9). Romera's thought can easily be spotted as a key principle among the best Slovene chefs, including Janez Bratovž, whose JB restaurant in Ljubljana is the only one in Slovenia included among the 100 best restaurants in the world. One of his mottos is "clean is sophisticated", aiming at the highest level of gastronomy and its trend.

Considering the promotion and implementation of the gastronomy strategy, The Taste Slovenia Culinary Centre at Dvor Jezeršek 1768, focuses on presenting and promoting Slovenian's gastronomy and cultural heritage, as well as the latest culinary achievements, which tap into the country's rich tradition of organising banquets, business dinners and protocol receptions at home and abroad. Another important part of the process of the gastronomy strategy implementation was "Gostilna Slovenija" (The Traditional Slovene Restaurant), brought to life after almost a decade of work. One of the major obstacles was a poor selection of traditional dishes in the "gostilna" pubs, lack of interest in Slovenia's culinary heritage, and lack of knowledge and expertise. Aiming to bring more foreign tourists to Slovenia through the selection of food and wine, "Gostilna Slovenija" has shone brightly over the last year. It strengthens the image of the most important traditional gastronomy institution in Slovenia's history, the "gostilna", and the promotion of regional dishes and wines in a tidy ambience, while simultaneously implementing the national gastronomy strategy. Slovenia features more than three thousand public places offering food, and most of them are of the "gostilna" type. "Gostilna Slovenija" therefore introduces the quality standard and the image of the exterior and the interior of the premises. The selection includes mainly house specialities, local and regional dishes, local ingredients and produce, food of controlled geographic origin, organic food, appropriate music, traditional service, and a range of other factors creating the brand image of "Gostilna Slovenija". It ensures better recognisability of gastronomy at home and abroad as the offerings of "gostilna" mirror the national cuisine, consisting of culinary historical memory, heritage, and the search for modern culinary trends (Gostilna Slovenija, 2012).

Wine consumption includes the entire territory of Europe, but just a part of its territory, when the production of wine is taken into consideration (Braudel 1988, 280). Geographically small, but rich in heritage, Slovenia boasts 3 wine regions, Podravje, Posavje and Primorska, with 14 territories illustrating biotic diversity and the resulting variety of wine aromas and tastes. Apart from the large selection of regional dishes Slovenia also boasts a wide range of authentic and internationally recognised wines. A practical gastronomy principle is that a regional dish calls for regional wine. The international affirmation of Slovenia's gastronomy in tourism is best helped by the best chefs, oil producers and winemakers. Slovene wine producers have so far been awarded numerous international prizes and have outdone the chefs, who have also won the attention of media. This has been augmented by numerous television cookery programmes shown on national and private television channels.

Another ingredient of great potential in tourism is undoubtedly salt, the sacred ingredient, indispensable in the nutrition of humans and animals and in preservation of meat and fish. It was a source of wealth for countries and merchants in Europe as well as in China (Braudel, 1988, 250–251). Slovenia's coast was for centuries a suitable environment for the introduction and development of saltpans, first recorded in the 13th century. They particularly flourished in the 16th century and have been preserved up to the present day in an almost identical form (Pucer, 2008, 36). The inhabitants of the coastal towns still boast that their homes have been built on income from salt. It illustrates the economic and social importance of salt production. Today salt is produced under the protected brand name "Piranska sol" (Piran Salt) and is considered to be among the best quality salts in the world. It is also popular and indispensable in the best "gostilna" businesses in Slovenia, and increasingly so in other countries as well. The more than 700-year tradition of traditional salt production in Slovenia could help get the saltpans of Piran included in the UNESCO register of the world's intangible heritage sites, which would be a suitable springboard for the sustainable development of heritage tourism. Years ago the introduction of the

Fig. 3: *700 years of traditional salt production. Saltpans of Sečovlje, 2011.*

Source: Author.

salt producers' festival contributed considerably to the popularity of the saltpans, and it is presently the best-attended mass tourism event on the coast promoting cultural heritage. An important role in the tourism development of the regional park – the saltpans of Sečovlje, where salt is produced – could be played by the eco museum of salt production. It is a special type of open-air museum started in 1971 in France. Eco-museums, on the other hand, are defined areas or regions with a distinct heritage identity, and their purposes include preserving the past and improving the well-being, in socio-economic terms, of local communities (Timothy, 2011, 329–330). Nevertheless, numerous small local museums have become tourism generators and at the same time have also encouraged the development of gastronomy in the communities and regions (Iorio, Wall, 2011, 1–15).

3.4 Food and wine events and festivals

Festivals are a celebration of something the local community wishes to share and which involves the wider public as participants in the experience (Hall, Sharples, 2008, 9–11) "Life without festive days is like a long road without restaurants" says the sign on the road leading to the popular pilgrimage site, Sveta gora by Bistrica ob Sotli. It reminds us of the worship of festive days and celebrations. Like everywhere around the world such days are marked by special food and wine. Habits and traditions may celebrate significant events in life, such as birth, birthdays, special days connected with personal names, wedding, or death, festive days and celebrations, such as carnival, Easter, Christmas, or special food served when particular work is done, for instance cutting grass or picking grapes. Although such festive days and celebrations are above all private, family celebrations, some of them, such as grape-picking and the celebration of new wine, are developing into mass tourism attractions. As a curiosity it has to be mentioned that birthday celebrations for children at McDonald's restaurants are becoming more frequent. In this way some new rituals and a sense of belonging are developed. It may be perceived as an initiation of the new generation of religious followers into the sanctuary of the universal, rather than the regional or local (Bogataj, 2007, 11).

The old saying that "Each village has its own style" is mirrored in the fact that every housewife has her own recipes (Gregorc, 2007, 60). The preservation of local specialities as well as the development of regional gastronomy may serve as a competitive advantage for Slovenia. At the same time it is necessary to combine gastronomy and tourism into programmes and events that will contribute to the competitive advantage of the destination. The more gastronomy is linked to experience, exploration, creativity, and cultural and architectural heritage, the stronger it becomes (Pak, 2007, 125–126).

Systematic and focused development of food and wine events and festivals is of recent origin, and is oriented towards projects of regional, national and international importance, and managed by several institutions. The majority of gastronomy or gastronomy-related events and festivals are of local origin, meant to communi-

Fig. 4: *St Martin's Day and the inauguration of the carnival prince – 11/11/ at 11.11. Ptuj, 2010.*

Source: Author.

cate the local traditions and cultures and dedicated primarily to local inhabitants in the vicinity. They are managed by local and village groups with a folkloristic, uncritical, romantic and nostalgic attitude to heritage. Admittedly, cultural heritage tourists are also often motivated by nostalgia (Huges, Carlsen, 2010, 18). Without planned tourism development the local remains the local. Seeing to it that the local becomes an important part of the regional has recently been the responsibility of the regional destination organisations.

The Europe of the carnivore (Braudel, 1988, 226) may be seen in several food and wine events and festivals in Slovenia. Local and regional festivals celebrate salami, ham, "bograč" (mixed meat stew), stews, "pršut" (air-cured ham), dormice, as well as fish and shellfish, but there are also events promoting "štruklji", cheese, onion, mushrooms, potatoes, pumpkins, apples, cherries, strawberries, beer, wine, and even salt.

Examples of more complex festival events, professionally organised and appealing to tourists, include the regional project "Gastronomy Treasure of Istria" (the Slovenian part) taking place in various settlements in Istria. There is also the nationally important "Red Herring Feast" in the Union Hotel in Ljubljana, held every Ash Wednesday since 1904. Among the new festivals there is "The Kranj Sausage Festival" held in the village of Sora, and the exhibition "The Delicacies of Slovene Farms" in Ptuj, organised as a parade of the best that is offered by the Slovene countryside. In Maribor they have recently begun organizing the international event VinDel – International Salon of Wines and Delicatessen Products that represents a connection between wine and culinary excellence. Among the most numerous visitors are caterers, sommeliers, food & beverage managers, chefs, hoteliers, merchants, tourism workers, gourmets and journalist. There is

Fig. 5: *Festival "The celebration of onion" as a folklore event. Moškajnci, 2006.*

Source: Author.

also the "Days of Poetry and Wine" project in Ptuj, which connects art and wine and attracts a worldwide audience. Food and wine festivals, however, are in the unique position of having two essential cultural symbols as their core attributes, and it is perhaps for this reason that they have become increasingly popular (Hede, 2008, 99).

3.5 Theme and culture paths as holistic gastronomic experience

The idea of the exploration of "the other" through travelling was introduced in 1960 by the Council of Europe under the name Collective Awareness of European Cultural Highlights and their Incorporation into the Leisure Culture. However, the first itinerary including culture was created much later, in 1987. It included the pilgrimage paths of Santiago de Copostela, and was supposed to set the standard for other European cultural itineraries. Such projects supposedly boost tourism development, in particular the cultural and general economic development of the country. In the last decade more than 20 European cultural routes have been created, thematically covering the territory of Europe. An example worth mentioning is the creation of "Olive Path". Unfortunately these projects did not succeed in attracting a great number of tourists; The Council of Europe insists on the fact that cultural itineraries are not to be considered tourism products (Jelinčić, 2008, 99–106). Unfortunately, this is a paradox of a special kind.

Culinary experience is becoming a part of the whole tourism destination experience (Krašna, 2007, 100). For this reason gastronomy is also an efficient vehicle for tourism recognisability and the attraction of local com-

Fig. 6: *Poetry reading and listening to poems with glass of wine in hand. "Days of poetry and wine". Ptuj, 2011.*

Source: Author.

munities, regions and countries. Italian, French, Greek, and also other cuisine and gastronomy specialities, have become attractions in their own right and lured tourists to the countries. Slovenia has shown considerable indecision since 2003 as to how to approach the promotion of traditional dishes and gastronomy. At the same time, major tourism fairs, such as those in the USA, have started to systematically change the image of the home of the cheap McDonald's. The Chinese started to promote their country as the destination of wine and gastronomy. Guest of honour at the Paris Cookbook Fair in 2012, China, offered numerous events promoting their gastronomy. The guidebook to the gastronomy of the Zadar region in Croatia in 2006 starts with the following thought: "If you wish to introduce Dalmatia – invite your guest to the table". Gastronomy is the best means for illustrating traditions, diversity and wealth to foreign tourists. This calls for a holistic approach to the process of planning the gastronomy experience.

Food and beverages are essential ingredients of a tourist's journey. Each tourist has to eat; therefore the tourism industry should pay special attention to gastronomy that reaches beyond the limits of mere biological nutrition. Socialising at the table may positively or negatively affect the time before and after a visit to a castle or the experience of an opera. The complete tourism experience of the chosen destination is inseparably connected with gastronomy. From a destination point of view, the local culture in relation to gastronomy may be approached in two ways:

1 The gastronomy – tourism approach: regional gastronomy generates interest in regional culture and the whole destination.

2 The tourism – gastronomy approach: the complete experience of the (regional) tourism destination leads to regional gastronomy and to local culinary and wine specialities.

The idea of experiencing other cultures through food and wine was first referred to as culinary tourism in 1998 (Long). In the culinary experience model, tourists are divided into four categories according to their preferences. These categories are: existential, experimental, recreational and indulgent (Krašna, 2007, 101–103). Culinary tourism, as a special type, has been flourishing, particularly in the past fifteen years. Some authors place it in the category of cultural tourism, based on cultural heritage and contemporary cultural creativity (Keršič Svetel, 2007, 91).

Food and beverages are part of the complete tourism experience, the gimmick and the medium of regional identity communication. This fact boosts the number of food and drink trails, wine roads, fruit trails, olive trails, and trails promoting cheese. However, many of them are inefficient as their function has been reduced to signposting and marking the way, instead of promoting the cultural heritage experience, natural attractions and the local lifestyle. Signposts do not offer stories, much less a complete tourism experience. In this way a wine road my leave us hungry and thirsty.

Wine represents not just the blood of the vine, but the blood and sometimes the ears of the wine-growers (Toussaint – Samat, 1993, 290). However, wine is not just to be consumed; it is the means of getting to know the lands of origin and the people producing it. More and more tourists are venturing off the beaten track in order to taste local wine and traditional dishes and explore all that is offered by the wine-growing regions, including culture, landscape and nature (D" Alessio, Santini, 2006, 7). Wine roads are becoming regional trademarks, as has happened for instance in Rioja in Spain; Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, and Alsace in France; and Chianti in Tuscany, Italy. They are the media of regional and even national gastronomy associations, their definition and element of attraction. Heritage facilities are a potential tool for economic development (Iorio, Wall, 2011, 1).

Slovenia presently does not feature gastronomy trails similar to those of other European regions or destinations, as for instance Mallorca, Rioja in Spain, Sardinia in Italy or numerous French destinations. Gastronomy trails, demand an organised approach to marketing if they are to provide an authentic experience of the landscape and people. The closest example of a connection between gastronomy and tourism may be found in the consortium of the Friuli Julia region under the auspices of the Made in Friuli brand, and the wine road system in the Austrian region of Styria. More and more tourism destinations are seeing the potential value of creating heritage tours and trails to link specific sites and nodes together as a more comprehensive cultural resource (Timothy, 2011, 478).

3.6 Gastronomy as the medium of tourism recognisability and local, regional, and national attractions

Cultural heritage is the essence of tourism in many destination areas worldwide. Every year, millions of people travel to view the Acropolis of Athens, the Coliseum in Rome and many other historic sites of international renown (Sigala, Leslie, 2006, 235). Similarly, gastronomy is an important medium for communicating heritage and promoting heritage tourism. The better we get to know the heritage and contemporary creativity in Europe's gastronomy, the easier it is to understand and evaluate specialities of local gastronomy, and the more efficient is the international promotion and marketing of the region's gastronomy in the context of culture and economy. The communication potential of local communities, regions and the country has a positive impact on the economy, culture and social development. Gastronomy is becoming the basis for various types of tourism, not only those directly connected with it , and is considered to be of the utmost importance by the UN WTO, which predicts exponential growth by 2020. This confirms the forecast structural megatrend of returning to local traditions and cultures. Heritage, including that of gastronomy itself, is not just a romantic and nostalgic memory of history depicted in folklore, but is also becoming an indispensable strategic foundation of sustainable development in every society. It is an alternative to the modern way of life, and a challenge for innovation. The future of heritage tourism with a great development potential does not depend solely on gastronomy. However, gastronomy remains an increasingly important medium of heritage popularisation in tourism. Food image as an element of a brand (Kalkstein-Silkes, Cai, Lehto, 2008, 70–71), together with wine image, completes the gastronomy destination image as a whole.

We have to move from information to interpretation and from interpretation to stories. Heritage needs modernity as tourism needs stories for the promotion of tourism services offered to domestic and foreign guests. The strength of regional and national gastronomy in tourism will grow in proportion to its connection to experience, discovery and exploration of places, nature, people, culinary arts and wines, and recreational activities. Gastronomic and cultural heritage are essential elements of attraction, and to meet the needs of contemporary tourism it may be necessary to allow for the adaptation of traditional dishes to the requirements of contemporary individuals.

European gastronomic perfumes emphasise the intertwining between heritage and modern creativity, the diversity of gastronomy, its uniqueness and speciality, since local gastronomica perfumes remind us of the common identity of Europe. Small bottles may be symbols or metaphors of compact knowledge, experience and fashion. In the era of globalisation and universal gastronomic flavours, they contribute to the popularization of traditional gastronomic knowledge and modern creativity. The universal is needed in order to be able to create a new image of tourism and culture in Europe, within its borders as well as beyond them, especially when we want to start a gastronomy dialogue with non-European cultures and destinations.

Slovenia's gastronomy as an international brand is helping Slovenia become one of the most dynamic and gastronomically interesting destinations in Europe, as evidenced by the increased international interest in new Slovene cuisine and wine producers. This has been confirmed by the visits of four eminent names in international gastronomy, Joël Robuchon, the chef and cook of the century, the brothers Enrico and Roberto Cerea from a Michelin three-star restaurant, and Jeffery Velia, two-time winner of the best junior cook in Europe title. They have shown great respect for Slovene culinary masters and wine producers.

Fig. 7: *Asparagus and olive oil desert as the highlight of the culinary event. Event "Gastronomy treasure of Istria", Portorož, 2011.*

Source: Author.

4 Discussion and conclusions

Gastronomy heritage and culture represent a program platform for the designing of innovative forms of gastronomy tourism. The monumental literary work "The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola" (1689) by baron Janez Vajkard Valvasor illustrates an exceptional applied dimension for contemporary tourist programs. In the case of Valentin Vodnik's "Cook Book" (1799) we can see that the book has become a gastronomy attraction - where tradition meets contemporary forms of culinary creativity. The heritage of gastronomy is an inexhaustible source for contemporary forms of culinary creativity, a fact which is confirmed by nearly thirty updated editions of "The Slovenian Cook Book" from 1868. A real "boom" is also happening in rural areas, where a dramatic expansion is occurring in the number and scope of events and festivals connected with local heritage, culture and gastronomy. The next phase will require from heritage and tourism experts even greater profiling of event and festival concepts at the local, regional and national levels on the basis of the national gastronomy strategy, with its focus on authenticity and local specialties. The new national strategy of gastronomy tourism, as an innovative networking and integration of gastronomy and tourism, represents a major improvement over previous approaches. If culture can be discovered in a new way by assigning it a new, specific value connotation (Lebe, 2008, 33), we can confirm the same for gastronomy tourism: tourism is discovering gastronomy in a new manner, allocating to it a new and different value connotation. In the era of globalization, gastronomy tourism has to offer direct experience of authenticity and the activation of all the senses.

The research clearly shows what kind of cohesive and developmental power food and wine events and festivals can have in the promotion of local communities, regions and countries. Following the example of some successful gastro-tourism destinations (e.g. Italy and Spain), the future of gastronomy tourism in Slovenia depends on the development of thematic and cultural gastronomy routes. In particular, authentic and traditional food, drinks and other gastronomic products are becoming an increasingly important element of local, regional and national identities international visibility. Therefore, it is important to build gastronomy tourism on the basis of research into gastronomy heritage and culture and on the trends in sustainable tourism. Sustainable gastronomy does not mean that we conserve the place and time, but rather that we are able to coexist with gastronomy heritage now and here. Sustainable gastronomy represents the culture of holistic coexistence with the heritage of gastronomy in the contemporary world. From the results of the research we can conclude that sustainable gastronomy tourism without heritage components simply cannot exist. The dimensions of heritage and culture offer challenges for creating new and innovative stories in gastronomy tourism, thereby increasing the international visibility of Slovenia.

The answer to the question of whether gastronomy is an essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption (Richards, 2002) is very short: "In gastronomia veritas!"

Dediščina gastronomije kot vir za razvoj gastronomskega turizma in kot medij za povečanje turistične prepoznavnosti Slovenije

Povzetek

V obdobju po osamosvojitvi Republike Slovenije kot samostojne države (1991) se je močno povečalo zanimanje za kulturno dediščino in identiteto posameznih krajev, kar je z vidika ustvarjanja nove identitete mlade države precej razumljivo. Skoraj vsaka vas vidi svojo prihodnost v razvoju turizma, ki temelji na lokalni identiteti. Ta se v svoji komunikacijski podobi kaže prav v obliki različnih etnografskih, etnoloških, folklornih, kulturnih, turističnih prireditev. Skupni imenovalec prav vsem so tudi številne lokalne gastronomske posebnosti. Značilnost tega obdobja je začinjena z romantičnim, nostalgičnim in nekritičnim odnosom do naše kulturne dediščine in zgodovine kot idiličnega spomina na življenje naših dedkov in babic. Do pomembne nadgradnje in kakovostnega preobrata je prišlo v obdobju po vstopu Slovenije v EU (2004), ko sta Evropa in svet začela odkrivati Slovenijo kot pozabljeni ali skriti biser Evrope. Prav gastronomske tradicije v sodobni preobleki ter kultura vina postajajo vse pomembnejši medij naše mednarodne prepoznavnosti. O tem obdobju lahko govorimo kot o prireditvenem in festivalskem razcvetu na področju kulturne dediščine, ki doživlja številne inovativne pojavne oblike tudi v kulinaričnih in vinskih festivalih. Zato ni naključje, da se deželo na stičišču alpske, mediteranske in panonske kulture poimenuje kot prstan Evrope, kot Evropo v malem ipd. K tej enkratnosti je zagotovo pripomogla tudi Strategija razvoja gastronomije v Sloveniji (2006) z gastronomsko piramido, ki določa 24 gastronomskih regij Slovenije s 140 reprezentativnimi jedmi. Takšna gastronomska platforma sooblikuje lokalne in regijske kulinarične festivale ter gastronomske destinacije.

Ključne besede: kulturna dediščina, gastronomska dediščina, gastronomska kultura, gastronomski dogodki, vinski dogodki, festivali, gastronomski turizem, dediščinski turizem

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review scientific article

A review of research in meetings management: some issues and challenges

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to provide a clear overview of existing research in the field of the meetings industry in international space and to open an academic discussion on the issues of this field in Slovenia. Through the method of literature analysis, we determine the position of the meetings industry in relation to business tourism and leisure tourism, explaining the most frequent definitions of meetings and pointing to the fragmentariness of the meetings industry, recognising it as a special research challenge. The existing research on the meetings industry is focused on five basic areas (economic impact of meetings, convention site-selection process, destination marketing, convention and visitors bureau (CVB) operations, and advances in technology). We also acknowledge the emergence of a completely new question of sustainability of meetings, or the "greening" of meetings. Due to lack of research on the meetings industry in Slovenia, researchers face some issues and challenges, and the increasing importance of the activities in the tourism sector creates a gap in research that needs to be filled, starting with the need to consider the depth and breadth of research. Due to the fragmentation of the meetings industry, we first need to establish appropriate terminology and conduct an in-depth analysis of the conditions in the area of the supply and demand of meetings facilities, perform an economic evaluation of the possible impacts of meetings and analyse the decision-making factors that shape the processes of selecting convention sites. Researchers in Slovenia also need to tackle new questions such as the greening of meetings. We have no doubt that the tradition of the meetings industry in Slovenia makes it necessary for us to encourage its development with research and ensure the continuing expansion of knowledge.

Key words: meetings industry, convention events, congress tourism, business tourism, meetings management research, tourism research

1 Introduction

The meetings industry has become a visible actor on the tourism map of individual countries and continents. According to many authors (Blažević & Alkier Radnić, 2005; UNWTO, 2006), the field has experienced significant growth in the last two decades, as can be seen in the increasing demand for organising all kinds of convention events; some Australian and German authors claim that the meetings industry has already fully recuperated from the global financial crisis (Deery, 2012; EIWT, 2012).

The meetings industry is a comparatively new phenomenon, although we can trace the earliest forms of convention events back to ancient Greece and Rome. A greater expansion of the industry can be observed after 1960 in Europe and North America (Lucianović, 1980; Weber & Chon, 2002), and twenty years later in Asia (Weber & Chon, 2002; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). In response to the development of the industry, professional and academic research appears in larger quantities after 1980, and even more so after 1990. The majority of academic research after 1980 originates in the American and Australian research spaces. In Europe, it is mostly produced in Great Britain; while the work done by Asian researchers has appeared only recently. The reasons for this situation can be seen in the development of the meetings industry on particular continents and in particular countries and in the state of the development of research and education institutions, as also noted by Harris, Jago, Allen, and Huyskens (2000).

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive presentation of research in the field of the meetings industry and an outline of the starting points for further research in Slovenia, which should contribute to the development of the meetings industry as a form of business tourism. In the Slovenian research space there is a marked absence of these kinds of research and discussion and there are only few professional publications in this field (Rosulnik, 2008; Kongresna Ljubljana 2020, 2011). This paper aims to open the academic discussion on research in the field of the meetings industry in Slovenia and the larger region by elucidating the position of the meetings industry in connection to business tourism and leisure tourism, by gathering various definitions of convention events and the meetings industry at one place, by presenting the fragmentariness of the meetings industry as a special research challenge and by determining the state of the industry in Slovenia as well as indicating potential future directions for its research.

Our analysis started with a search for relevant literature in the form of scientific monographs accessible in Slovenian libraries and continued with a refinement of the search for those articles that concisely recapture academic publications in the field of the meetings industry. While searching for different publications with the help of the Internet and academic bibliographic bases, we then applied the "snowball method" in order to establish the incidence and distribution of key content. When looking for key content, we could not avoid publications created by professional associations and institutions in the field of the meetings industry as these often represent a starting point for scholarly research. We have considered those that have a firmly established reputation in the field due to their long-term activity as well as those that show international comparability and are also registered in academic periodicals.

The attention of researchers is oriented towards several segments; according to some (Ladkin, 2002; Blažević & Alkier Radnić, 2005; Lee & Back, 2005a; Lee & Back, 2005b), the major challenges of research in the meetings industry lie in:

- the use of appropriate terminology and employment of correct definitions of the industry as such as well as of convention events such as meetings, incentives, congresses, conferences and exhibitions;

- fragmentation of the meetings industry, which is divided into several areas;

unification of gathering statistical data for research; the meetings industry is a relatively recent phenomenon and there are many dilemmas about how to collect and use data, where this is true for both secondary and primary data.

2 Fragmentariness of the meetings industry – a challenge for researchers?

One of the central dilemmas of research in the meetings industry is in the use of appropriate terminology and the definitions of concepts encountered every day by the practitioners in the industry. Research projects and studies in the field of the meetings industry are mostly published in the Anglo-American, English-speaking research space, which is why the terminology appropriate to the field can be mostly found in English. Corresponding terms in other languages (comp. Caso, D'Angella & Quintè, 2010; Schreiber, 2012) tend to be close to the English ones. With a view to using appropriate terminology, we need to highlight two significant facts pointed out by various researchers (Ladkin, 2002; Blažević & Alkier Radnić, 2005; Lee & Back, 2005a; Lee & Back, 2005b, UNWTO, 2006):

- firstly: the use of nonstandard definitions, which poses a serious problem for research, given the incoherence of approaches to collecting data and their interpretation from a methodological viewpoint;

- secondly: a lack of unified concepts, both when determining the industry as a broader concept and when more narrowly defining particular types of convention events in the industry.

In literature on the subject, we often come across the concept "industry", which carries different prefixes, such as "the meetings industry", or "the conventions and meetings industry" (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Opperman, 1996b; Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Seekings, 1992), "conference industry" (Rogers, 1998), "convention industry" (Kim, Chon, in Chung, 2003; Opperman, 1996a; Qu, Li & Chu, 2000; Bernini, 2009; Crouch & Ritchie, 1997; Zhang, Leung & Qu, 2007; Severt & Palakurthi, 2008; Baloglu & Love, 2005; Lee, McKercher & Kim, 2009), "MICE industry" (McCabe, Poole, Weeks & Leiper, 2000; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999; Lawrence & McCabe, 2001; Carlsen, 1999; Weber, 2001). There are also references to "conference business" (Opperman & Chon, 1997), and "business events" (Seekings, 1992; Jago & Deery, 2010, Mair & Thompson, 2009). Different terms are often used, even by the same author (Weber & Chon, 2002; Seekings, 1992; Opperman, 1996b, Bernini, 2009). Numerous academic papers tend to use the term "convention industry" and "meetings" is often regarded as an umbrella term; while professional contributions to the field (UNWTO, 2006; CIC, 2004; BECA, 2012) indicate that in recent years the term "the meetings industry" has increasingly come to the fore.

We also note the frequent use of the term "the MICE industry", where the acronym MICE stands for four basic convention events, which differ in terms of content as well as in key activities, namely: Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions. The following acronyms are less commonly encountered: MECE (Meetings, Events, Conventions, Exhibitions), MCE (Meetings, Conventions, Exhibitions), and – only seldom – CEMI (Conventions, Exhibitions, Meetings, Incentives) (Weber & Chon, 2002).

We have found that there are at least two reasons for the frequent use of the term "the meetings industry". Firstly, the term "meetings" best captures the various kinds of convention events as such, basically denoting the meeting of persons for business purposes. Secondly, scholarly discussions and professional publications appear in English, which means that we have to deal with the diversity of the use of terms for central events in the industry, such as "convention", "conference" and "congress", as well as determine the nature of the industry as such. In most cases, the difference in use is due to the distinction between American and European congress spaces.

Lack of cohesion in definitions is at its most visible when we are trying to categorize types of convention events and define their characteristics; something that has been noted by different authors (Rogers, 1998; Seekings, 1992; Weber & Chon, 2002) who emphasise that terms and definitions represent a special challenge for researchers in the meetings industry. Often the definitions that signify an important reference frame for researchers (comp. Rogers, 1998) are also determined by professional associations in the field of the meetings industry, such as BECA (Business Events Council of Australia), CIC (Convention Industry Council), CLC (Convention Liaison Council), ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association), IAPCO (The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers) and EITW (Das Europäische Institut für TagungsWirtschaft). Scholarly papers published by professional associations tackle the task of defining and distinguishing between convention events, including conventions, congresses, conferences, meetings, as well as the various accompanying events, such as incentives, trade-fairs, exhibitions and others. Basic conference events are most in focus, while the attributes of a particular event considered to be essential are its size (indicated by the number of attending participants), its length of duration and periodicity. In Appendix 1, we give a more detailed overview of the definitions of convention events as understood by researchers and professional associations in the meetings industry.

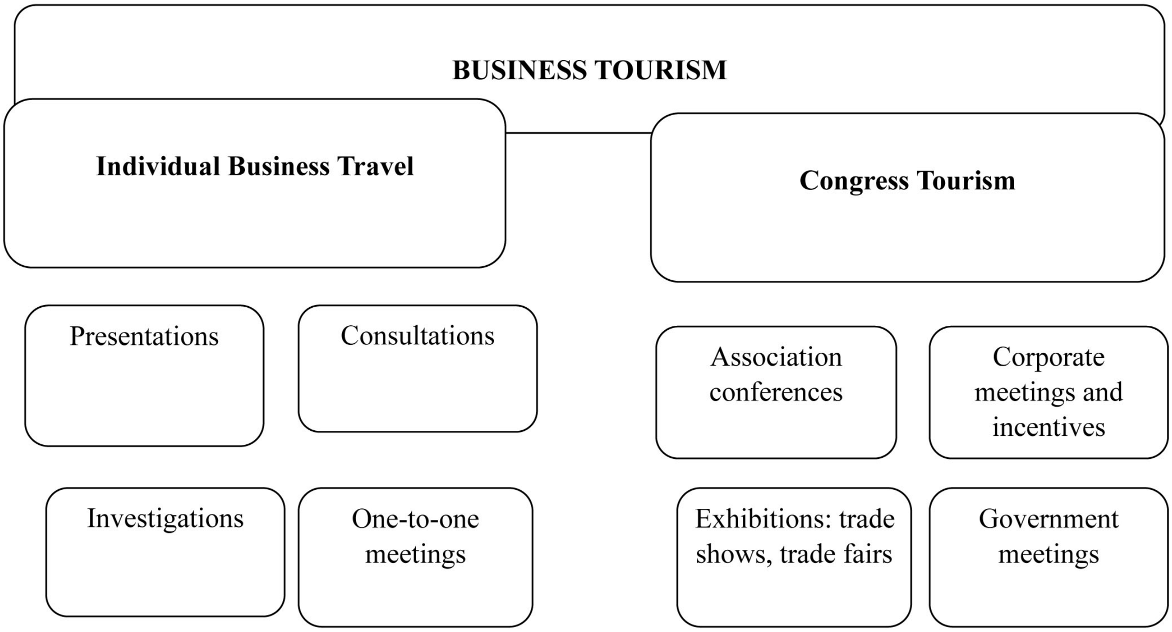
The analysis of literature includes articles and publications by professional associations discussing the meaning of basic convention events; our main purpose was to gather in one place the definitions of various authors that can be found in the respective sources.

We shall explain some differences in meaning that distinguish particular concepts. The greatest dilemma is experienced in using the terms "conference", "convention" and "congress". The essential differences can be drawn between the terms "conference" and "congress", or "conference" and "convention". Various researchers agree that the term "convention" has a greater currency in North America, Australia and Asia, while Europeans prefer to use the term "congress" (Rogers, 1998; Lucianović, 1980; CIC, 2011; Lawson, 1992, in Weber & Chon, 2002). Some authors (Weber & Chon, 2002, 103; Seekings, 1992; Rogers, 1998; Lucianović, 1980) roughly distinguish between these terms in considering the aim and location of the meeting as well as the number of participants. Thus a convention, or congress, is defined as an event that is larger in size than a conference. The term "convention" is often associated with the periodicity of the meeting's implementation, while some researchers (Seekings, 1992; Rogers, 1998; Hiller, 1995) define it as the meeting of a narrowly defined group of individuals (e.g. state institutions).

The term "meetings" is mostly used to label events attended by a smaller number of people (Rutherford, 1990, in Weber & Chon, 2002; Seekings, 1992; Hughes, 1988, in Weber & Chon, 2002), allowing us to basically distinguish it from the terms "conference" and "convention". Meetings exist in various forms, including corporate meetings, seminars, symposiums or training programs.

What all these definitions have in common is that the participants' main motive for attending events is a business interest or work; this is why recent literature (comp. Jago and Deery, 2010) and praxis (UNWTO, 2006) refer to them as business events. Rogers (1998, 19) defines a business tourist as a "traveller whose main purpose for travelling is to attend an activity or event associated with his/her business or interest". Despite different forms of convention events, their organisation constitutes a special kind of tourism known as business tourism, which differs from the leisure tourism industry in the basic motive for travelling, while also being closely related to it (Davidson and Cope, 2003). Forms of leisure tourism (e.g. incentive travels, sightseeing, trips and similar) often complement convention events, despite business being the basic purpose of travelling. It is important to note that we can distinguish between two forms of business tourism, following Rogers (1998) and are presented in Figure 1. The congress industry – or also "congress tourism" – is its mass form, consisting of the above-described convention events, while its individual form is individual business tourism, which concerns one person's business-motivated trip (e.g. a travelling salesman) (Rogers, 1998; Davidson & Cope, 2003; Jago & Deery, 2010). However this latter form is not included in research on business tourism or the meetings industry. When we use the terms "business tourism", "conference tourism" and "meetings tourism", what we have in mind is exclusively their mass form. The definition of "meetings tourism" was provided by the AIEST (The International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism) in Europe in 1970, who defined it as "… a group of activities and relation-

Fig. 1: *Classification of forms of business tourism*



Source: Adapted from: Davidson & Cope, 2003; Rogers, 1998; Jago & Deery, 2010.

ships that stem from the travel and stay of individuals coming together to exchange mainly scientific and professional knowledge, and where the meeting place is not a place of work or residence" (Lucianović, 1980; Prebežac, Mikulić & Peručić, 2008).

A more detailed look at particular activities comprising the meetings industry in the above image reveals that particular convention events are not distinguished solely by differences in their content but also by those relating to the criterion of the holder, actor or organiser of the event. These can be corporations that form the market of corporate meetings; professional associations (usually within the confines of one industry or profession), which comprise the association market; and governmental or political bodies, which represent the market for government meetings. Research usually includes corporate and associations' meetings; while the meetings of government and political bodies are not part of statistical research, especially due to the sensitivity of collecting data (comp. Weber & Chon, 2002; Rogers, 1998; Opperman, 1996b; Crouch & Ritchie, 1997; Crouch & Louviere, 2004).

The challenge for researchers is exacerbated by the fact that the fragmentation of convention events is shown not only in differences in their size but also in terms of the number of participating countries, which categorizes convention events into local/regional, national and international. The size of convention events is important from the point of view of research, since gathering and comparing the results of studies of events that differ in size can raise issues of methodology (Weber & Chon, 2002). On the other hand, due to the fragmentation of the meetings industry, the implementation of continuous research and reference to statistical information are very rare and uncertain and usually occur at the level of congress offices (local and national events) or professional associations. Two world-renowned professional associations, UIA (Union of International Associations) and ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association), have for more than six decades collected data uniquely for convention events at the international level, where each defines the concept of an international event in its own terms, rendering their data incomparable. We should note that we cannot always get hold of an accurate image of the meetings industry in the examined countries since their reports include only those events that involve more than 300 or 500 participants – although the remainder of such events also play a significant role in shaping the meetings map of a particular country. Thus the ICCA recorded 20 international congress events in the city of town of Ljubljana in its 2010 report, according it the 53rd position in its ranking (ICCA, 2010) even though Ljubljana actually hosted 43 such events that year (Kongresna Ljubljana 2020, 2011). In spite of this drawback, its statistical reports often represent an important source of data, providing a useful frame reference for both researchers and practitioners, due to the long duration of the data-gathering period and stable methodology applied.

The analysis of sources related to definitions in the meetings industry reveals that the industry is strongly fragmented, which poses special challenges to researchers; or, as Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007, 1124) claim, it "... represents an unexploited market for researchers". The first step in any research should consist in the appropriate definitions of convention events and the meetings industry as such, as this ensures the consistent gathering of data and comparability of data as well as helping to provide a suitable interpretative framework and critical understanding of the industry.

3 The existing research in the meetings industry and new opportunities

Research in the meetings industry is a relatively new phenomenon since research papers on the subject appear mostly after the 1980s and these first appeared in the Anglo-American world (Rutherford, 1980, in Weber & Chon, 2002). We cannot neglect the contribution of a Yugoslav researcher (Lucianović, 1980), whose publication was certainly considered groundbreaking in Europe. Research in Asia emerges a little later on (Kim, Chon & Chung, 2003; Zhang, Leung & Qu, 2007). The phenomenon of scholarly research in the meetings industry is affected by the development of the meetings industry market as such, as recognised by Weber and Chon (2002), and Lee and Back (2005a); this market flourishes in the United States of America, Great Britain and Australia. We may add that the Yugoslav market of the meetings industry in the region of southeastern Europe was already in full swing by the 1970s (Zidanski, 2005), which explains why the first publications started to appear in former Yugoslavia (which also includes a reference to Slovenia) in the first years of the 1980s.

An overview of the literature shows that only a handful of authors provide a comprehensive content analysis of published papers (Lee & Back, 2005a; Lee & Back, 2005b; Yoo & Weber, 2005; Carlsen, 1999). The main observation made by various researchers is that different publications draw attention to different areas of the meetings industry. What they have in common is that the majority of research is done in the field of the economic impact of conventions, a topic that tends to attract researchers' attention first (Carlsen, 1999). Another field that boasts a large number of publications is convention site-selection process (Lee & Back, 2005a; Lee & Back, 2005b; Yoo & Weber, 2005). Researchers in this field distinguish between two parties to the choice of destination: the organisers of and participants in the convention event. Most publications focus on the organisers as those who choose the destination, which is confirmed by researchers themselves. Studies examining participants' opinions on location choice are rare (Opperman, 1996a; Opperman, 1996b; Baloglu & Love, 2005; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Jago & Deery, 2005; Filipović, 2007), although the views of participants often count more than those of the organisers (Weber & Chon, 2002; Chen, 2006; Dragičević, Stankov, Armenski & Štetić, 2011). The fields of destination marketing, use of modern technology and the role of congress offices in the meetings industry are also gaining ground (Lee & Back, 2005a).

The above-described research areas in the meetings industry need to be broadened, as our review of the existing literature in the field shows that, in accordance with the general trends of global tourism, in the last two years there has been a growing interest in the sustainability of convention events. The meetings industry is increasingly oriented towards greening itself in all aspects, an agenda that was first initiated and implemented by professional associations (CIC, 2004). Two years ago, first academic papers on the topic started to appear. These have tended to be written from the perspective of a broader concept of corporate social responsibility. Researchers (Lee, Breiter & Choi, 2012; Mair & Jago, 2010; Park & Boo, 2010; Whitfield & Dioko, 2012; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012) believe that neither research nor discussion have so far focused on questions of the environmental influences of convention events' on the destination, even though researchers have actively considered environmental issues for at least a decade in the framework of leisure tourism. Researchers agree that we need to define the concept of a "green meeting" and that there is potential for research in the areas of the meetings industry: on the side of the convention organisers, convention suppliers and convention participants. The practitioners in the field of the meetings industry started with the activities of greening the convention events by compiling guidelines and recommendations for ecologically conscious behaviour (comp. CIC, 2004). Slovenia also provided a practical example: the Slovenian Convention Bureau's campaign, which is entitled BeBee (KUS, 2012a) and which started in 2010.

Just as the meetings industry extends and relates to other activities in tourism, from hotel management, hospitality industry, sustainable development, organisation and management, to the business of organising events, scholarly papers on the subject also appear in scientific periodicals that cover all these areas. Most frequently, we find contributions of interest in the following internationally acclaimed periodicals: Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Economics, The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, The International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, The International Journal of Hospitality Management, International Journal of Tourism Research.

A scientific periodical that specialises in the field of the meetings industry is Journal of Convention and Event Tourism, which started to appear in 1997 as the Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management and which was renamed in 2004. In 1997, only one issue was published; since 2006 there have been four issues per year.

One of the more significant findings is that, at the beginning of the emergence of scholarly and professional papers of the new field, the researchers we have included in our study were mostly focused on seeking the meaning of particular convention events (comp. Seekings, 1992; Weber & Chon, 2002), while, after the turn of the millennium, they tend to favour measuring the impact of the meetings industry on tourism and more broadly (comp. Lee & Back, 2005a). Along with the consolidation of suitable terms of reference, the most recent challenge in research is currently unfolding in the area of sustainably oriented convention events, namely the possibility of redefining the view on the existing research in the meetings industry, as attested in the majority of recent publications, e.g. by Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012).

4 The meetings industry in Slovenia and research challenges

The meetings industry in Slovenia has a long tradition. Even though the first congress in the present-day meaning of the word – the Congress of Laibach (also known as the Congress of the Holy Alliance), took place in Ljubljana in 1821 – a more substantial development of the activity begins after the year 1960 (Zidanski, 2005). Slovenia as a congress destination (with Ljubljana and Portorož) was part of the Yugoslav convention market, which was in full bloom also due to the large meetings of the then political authorities (Lucianović, 1980).

After gaining independence, Slovenia had to take care of the basic infrastructural conditions for the proper functioning of the meetings industry and especially for efficient marketing in order to maintain its position on the European convention map. Slovenia's inclusion in the EU has increased its credibility; it has now become the leading congress country in southeastern Europe. Today, however, other former Yugoslavian republics, such as Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, are increasingly investing in congress infrastructure and already catching up with Slovenia. Major Slovenian towns where convention events take place are Ljubljana, Portorož, Bled and Maribor, while the meetings industry is also developing in some of the Slovenian spa resorts. Ljubljana is the leading Slovenian convention town, in terms of conference facilities and number of convention events. According to the report of the international professional association ICCA (ICCA, 2012), Ljubljana hosted 44 international convention events in 2011 with more than 500 participants, occupying the 27^{th} place among 200 European cities.

The central office, which connects the suppliers of convention services and is responsible for promoting Slovenia as a meetings destination, is the Slovenian Convention Bureau. Since 2004 the Bureau has been supported by state aid to establish companies in the field of the meetings industry. The Slovenian Convention Bureau operates as a non-profit organisation, an independent partner that mediates information between the organisers and suppliers of services to the the meetings. In order to obtain a clearer view of the meetings services offered and provide a higher level of service quality, the Bureau passed Slovenian convention standards in 2007. On the global scale, Slovenia is one of the first convention countries to introduce such a standardisation (KUS, 2012b). Standards are classified into ten different groups according to the type of supplier from A to J, where each group has its own minimal general and advisable conditions as well as optional ecological conditions. The latter represent a pioneering step of the Slovenian meetings industry, considering that the issue of sustainability of convention events is globally still in its initial phase.

Scientific research in the field of the meetings industry in Slovenia is almost entirely undeveloped, as there is a noticeable absence of studies and papers. Only two empirical studies have been carried out among convention participants and convention suppliers for the Ljubljana destination so far (Rosulnik, 2008; Kongresna Ljubljana 2020, 2011) and these two studies are accessible only to the expert public. They were implemented in 2008 and 2011 and measured similar parameters. In the participants' population, the parameters that were in focus were profile, consumption and customs; in the population of the organisers of convention events, their profile and characteristics were placed in the forefront together with organisation of meetings. The results of the research do not allow for generalisation due to the small size of the sample but they do offer an insight into the state of the Slovenian meetings industry. As claimed by Rosulnik (2008), in 2006, Slovenia hosted more than 700,000 convention participants; if we add participants of those meetings that fall outside of the official records (e.g. university conferences, corporate meetings), the number of such participants would reach around a million.

A closer look shows that the majority of participants come from the countries of the European Union; on average they spend €2,350 per person over the course of a three-day event; they tend to be highly educated and they belong to the private sector. Their primary motives for attendence are: an opportunity for networking, professional education and safety of the destination, which is in line with international studies (Mair & Thompson, 2009). The characteristics of convention events show that on average they last for three days and take place in congress centres, while participants most frequently attend those that involve from 501 to 1000 guests. In the view of organisers, the attraction of Slovenia as a meetings destination is its easy accessibility and attractiveness as well as the diversity of the meetings services (Rosulnik, 2008).

In which fields of the Slovenian meetings industry can we expect research challenges? The quickest answer would be: in all, as the marked absence of research in the Slovenian research space seems to indicate that the challenges we face are unlimited. Indubitably, we will need to fill in this gap with academic papers that will unite the meetings industry and that will place it in the Slovenian tourism research space. In the initial phase, we need an argument-based discussion about the breadth and scope of research that should be undertaken in comparison with research in other parts of Europe, America, Asia and Australia. Due to absence of research it makes sense to start with a critical analysis on the side of the supply of meetings services and to investigate the organisation of the industry as such. It also remains to establish the types of convention events, the extent to which they are carried out, how dispersed they are and what is the profile of convention participants. Considering global research, potential areas for exploration are definitely in the field of economic influences of convention events as well as factors of convention site selection, on the side of suppliers of services to the meetings and organisers of convention events as well as on the side of participants. Due to the relatively sustainable practices of Slovenian tourism, the field of "green convention events" presents an opportunity for comparative research in sustainable development in the meetings industry; while the relative smallness of Slovenia as a meetings destination leads us to think that we could benefit from an assessment of its carrying capacity according to the model suggested by Jurinčič (2009) for Istria as a tourist destination. At any rate, first of all we need to stabilise suitable terminology and the methodology of collecting data, considering the fragmentariness of the meetings industry, as we thus ensure an equal starting point for research and discussion. Since both the world expert public as well as the Slovenian one show that practice usually "overtakes" academic debates, it is advisable to do research in the meetings industry in cooperation with its main holders and thus enable research support for the future development of the industry and for the expansion of knowledge in the field.

5 Conclusions

The aim of the paper is to open a discussion in the field of research in the meetings industry in Slovenia, which we found to be undeveloped. We believe it will require quite some effort to fill this gap in research.

Fragmentation, which is characteristic of the meetings industry, is a special challenge for researchers since it necessitates the establishment of precise research frameworks and requires caution when introducing research projects. In the field of the meetings industry, we often encounter a problem when defining convention events and activities as such, which does not always allow for appropriate comparability of research projects.

Research in the meetings industry has so far been attached to five basic areas; we also notice the emergence of a new question concerning the environmental sustainability of meetings, which derives from a broader concept of the social responsibility of companies. This emerging field generates new problems for research in the meetings industry: the introduction of new terminology ("green meetings"), the investigation of environmental influences on convention events, new motives of service suppliers, organisers and participants, and also the question of the competitive advantage of green meetings in Slovenia.

Research in the meetings industry in Slovenia is still in its initial stage; this is why so many possibilities for its implementation are opening. In addition to defining the industry appropriately and determining the subjects and extent of research (including the issue of "greening" the industry), research has to be led in the direction of ensuring credible results, thus enabling the scientific and professional development of the industry.

This paper thus attempts to start the discussion about research in the field of the meetings industry in Slovenia. It contributes to the scientific discipline through its extensive review of contemporary debates and global research that is currently filling the gap in the Slovenian research space and suggests possibilities for further research.

Pregled raziskovanja v kongresni dejavnosti: vprašanja in izzivi

Povzetek

Namen prispevka je pregledno predstaviti raziskovanje na področju kongresne dejavnosti v mednarodnem prostoru in odpreti akademsko razpravo na obravnavano tematiko v Sloveniji. Z metodo analize literature opredeljujemo položaj kongresne dejavnosti v odnosu do poslovnega in prostočasnega turizma, podajamo pogostejše definicije kongresnih prireditev, fragmentiranost kongresne dejavnosti pa prikažemo kot izziv za raziskovanje. Dosedanje raziskovanje v kongresni dejavnosti je vpeto v pet temeljnih področij (ekonomski vplivi kongresnih prireditev, izbira kongresne destinacije, destinacijski marketing, delovanje kongresnih uradov in nove tehnologije v kongresni dejavnosti), ugotavljamo pa, da se pojavlja popolnoma novo vprašanje trajnostne naravnanosti kongresnih prireditev oziroma "ozelenjevanja kongresnih prireditev". Zaradi pomanjkanja raziskav o kongresni dejavnosti v Sloveniji se pred raziskovalce postavljajo nekatera vprašanja in izzivi, saj je zaradi vse večje pomembnosti dejavnosti v turističnem sektorju treba zapolniti raziskovalno vrzel, v prvi fazi pa razmisliti o globini in širini raziskav. Glede na fragmentiranost kongresne dejavnosti je treba najprej uveljaviti ustrezno terminologijo ter opraviti poglobljeno analizo stanja na področju ponudbe kongresnih storitev in njegovem povpraševanju, opraviti ekonomsko oceno možnih vplivov kongresnih prireditev ter analizirati dejavnike odločitve za izbiro kongresne destinacije. Tudi v Sloveniji je pri raziskovanju treba slediti novim vprašanjem, kot je ozelenjevanje kongresnih prireditev. Menimo, da je zaradi tradicije kongresne dejavnosti v Sloveniji treba z raziskovanjem podpreti njen razvoj ter poskrbeti za širitev znanja.

Ključne besede: kongresna dejavnost, kongresne prireditve, kongresni turizem, raziskovanje kongresne dejavnosti, raziskovanje v turizmu

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APPENDIX

Table 1: *Review of definitions in the meetings industry*

Definition / aim of MEETING	**Source / Author**
Any off-site gathering (including conventions, congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums) which brings together people for a common purpose: the sharing of information. This defines both corporate business (CB) and association meetings.	BECA (Business Events Council of Australia)
An event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialise, or attend other organised events. There is no exhibit component to this event.	CIC (Convention Industry Council)
A meeting is a coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. This can be on an ad hoc basis, or according to set pattern.	CLC (Convention Liaison Council), 1993
A meeting is a general term indicating the coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. Frequency: can be on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern, as for instance annual general meetings, committee meetings, etc.	ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association); IAPCO (The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers)
A meeting is an event where fifteen or more people meet on the premise for a minimum of six hours with a fixed agenda. A meeting lasts less than two days and does not include overnight accommodation.	Hughes, 1988
A meeting is an event that brings people together for the purposes of sharing information and to discuss and solve organisational and operational problems. It is usually a small event, often involving only a few executives. It can be a corporate meeting, seminar, symposium, or training program.	Rutherford, 1990

A meeting is usually a much smaller event, often involving a few executives discussing business round a boardroom table. The word meeting is also used in wider sense to describe conferences, meetings and seminars in a collective manner.	Seekings, 1992
A meeting is defined as a coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. This can be on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern.	CLC (Convention Liaison Council), 1993; in Weber and Chon, 2002
Definition / aim of CONFERENCE	**Source / Author**
1) Participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving and consultation. 2) An event used by any organisation to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate or give publicity to some area of opinion on a specific issue. No tradition, continuity or periodicity is required to convene a conference. Although not generally limited in time, conferences are usually of short duration with specific objectives. Conferences are generally organised on a smaller scale than congresses.	CIC (Convention Industry Council)
Participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving and consultation. As compared with a congress, a conference is normally smaller in scale and more select in character – features which tend to facilitate the exchange of information. The term "conference" carries no special connotation as to frequency. Though not inherently limited in time, conferences are usually of limited duration with specific objectives.	ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association); IAPCO (The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers)
A meeting of two or more people to discuss a common concern.	IACVB (International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaux)
Conference often last for several days and may attract hundreds or even thousands of delegates; they may involve complex social programmes, exhibitions and displays. Many of larger conferences have international audiences and are events of national and international interest.	Seekings, 1992
A conference is an out of office meeting of at least six hours duration, involving a minimum of eight people.	BTA (British Tourist Authority, 1999) in Weber and Chon, 2002

Conferences are for the most part meetings that are important in terms of topics as well as consequences of the accomplished work. A conference is a meeting which is usually smaller than a congress, but may still be attended by several hundred participants. It may be concerned with a more narrowly defined topic than a congress and it involves just one group of professionals in the framework of one discipline.	Zidanski, 2005
A conference is an interactive meeting intended for discussion, exchange of opinions, seeking solutions and consultation. A conference is not limited with a particular sequence of events or length of duration. It is usually smaller in scope and shorter than a congress, and serves a specific purpose.	Kongresna Ljubljana 2020
Definition / aim of CONVENTION	**Source / Author**
1) The regular coming together of large groups of individuals, generally to discuss a particular subject. A congress will often last several days and have several simultaneous sessions. The length of time between congresses is usually established in advance of the implementation stage, and can be either pluriannual or annual. Most international or world congresses are of the former type while national congresses are more frequently held annually. 2) Meeting of an association of delegates or representatives from constituent organisations. 3) European term for convention.	CIC (Convention Industry Council)
In continental Europe congress is the usual English equivalent for the convention.	Seekings, 1992
A congress involves a larger number of participants: several hundred to several thousand. It is widely open to cooperation of all organisations and competent persons. The conclusions of a congress are intended for the general public. Congresses take place in intervals of a few years.	Zidanski, 2005
A congress is a regular meeting of a large group of individuals with the purpose of discussing a particular topic. It lasts for several days and includes several simultaneous lectures. A congress occurs on a continuous basis, annually or once every two years.	Kongresna Ljubljana 2020, 2011
Definition / aim of CONVENTION	Source / Author
1) An event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialise, or attend other organised events. There is a secondary exhibit component. 2) Gathering of delegates, representatives, and members of a membership or industry organisation convened for a common purpose. Common features include educational sessions, committee meetings, social functions, and meetings to conduct the governance business of the organisation. Conventions are typically recurring events with specific, established timing.	CIC (Convention Industry Council), 2006 CIC (Convention Industry Council), 2011
Assemblage of delegates, representatives, and members of an organisation convened for a common purpose. A general and formal meeting of a legislative body, social or economic group in order to provide information on a particular situation and in order to establish consent on policies among the participants. Usually of limited duration with set objectives, but no determined frequency.	IACVB (International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaux)
The word convention implies a gathering of greater importance, size and formality – perhaps to formulate policy and select candidates for office. (…) The word convention is preferred in America.	Seekings, 1992

A convention is defined as an assembly of persons for some common object or for the exchange of ideas, views, and information of common interest to the group. (…) … is widely used in in America, Australia, and Asia to describe the traditional form of annual or total membership meetings.	Lawson, 1992; in Weber and Chon, 2002
A convention is an assembly of people for the exchange of ideas, views, and information that is periodical and often accompanied by an exhibition of products and services.	Rutherford, 1980; in Weber and Chon, 2002

Source: Adapted from UNWTO, 2006; Weber & Chon, 2002; Seekings, 1992; Kongresna Ljubljana 2020, 2011; Zidanski, 2005, CIC, 2011.

original scientific article

The impact of the financial crisis on business events at natural spas – the Slovenian case

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Abstract

To determine the impact of the economic downturn that officially hit Slovenia in 2009 on the number, purpose, type and budgets of business events held at Slovenian natural spas. The study's aim is to develop guidelines in the field of business events management at Slovenian natural spas. The research was carried out among key representatives from Slovenian natural spas who play an active role in managing events. Data were via a questionnaire that collected information about the purpose, number and type of events for business clients at Slovenian natural spas. The number of business events held at Slovenian natural spas has not changed during the economic crisis; however, the number of events held to increase stakeholders' loyalty and those held to communicate to the wider public has increased. Based on these findings, we can conclude that organisation managers are aware of the importance of good, solid, long-term relations with business clients for maintaining a successful trade (especially in the time of crisis). Since business events have the potential to be very profitable for the natural spas, we suggest that they adjust their programming and outreach to focus on business clients. The demand for business events is increasing; there is a commensurate need for effective marketing of business packages and offers.

Key words: economic crisis, financial crisis, business event, business clients, natural spas

1 Introduction

In 2007 and 2008 came increasingly frequent news concerning the growth of mortgage defaults, illiquidity of central banks, financial injections, a decline in stock indexes and a real estate crisis spreading from abroad (first from the United States and Great Britain, and later from nearby European countries). Towards the end of 2008, we noticed the first consequences in Slovenia. Many companies forecast a reduction in orders, and unemployment began to rise. Štiblar (2008) described the emergence of the global crisis and its impact on Slovenia and provided advice on how to survive the crisis. Others further confirmed the presence and severity of the economic and financial crisis in our part of the world. "It is clear that the global economy is facing its worst economic and financial crisis since World War II", Boorman (2009) declared. Repovž (2009) wrote that "the economic historians, Eichengreen and O'Rourke, prove that the current recession is even more severe than the Great Depression of the thirties. In their opinion this is shown by the more severe decline in industrial production in some of the most developed countries (France, Italy), a significantly greater reduction in global trade and a very large cut in the rates of interest in seven leading countries." Slovenia did not experience as significant a decline in economic growth in 2008 as some other European countries. Yet, according to Štiblar (2008), "people in Slovenia today not only feel the economic recession but also the world economic crisis that results from the financial crisis that grew from the U.S. mortgage crisis." The recession officially hit Slovenia in early 2009 (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the Republic of Slovenia, 2009). In June, the Minister for Development and European Affairs published data on the fall in growth in the first quarter of 2009 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2009). Repovž & Gole (2009) described the situation:

"The publication of the National Statistical Office on economic activity in the first quarter of 2009 confirmed as expected that Slovenia is officially in recession. After a relatively mild fall in growth in the fourth quarter of 2008, the gross national product (GDP) shrank by as much as 6.5% in the first three months of 2009 which is actually 8.5% over the same period last year. Thus, Slovenia was much closer to the EU countries that the crisis hit the most (Ireland, the Baltic trio, partly Hungary)."

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) began to perceive the consequences of the crisis in the tourism sector as of June 2008. In 2009, the organisation noted a stagnation or slight decline in international tourism. The global economic crisis was strongly reflected in Slovenian tourism in the first half of 2009 (Turistično ogledalo, 2010). Smeral (2009) characterised the effects, writing, "The economic and financial crisis has a strong impact on the tourism industry. Major changes in consumer behaviour, a large rise in unemployment, insecurity and the like have an effect on consumption and investments. Lower consumer consumption is perceived in the declining profits from tourism activities which clearly has an influence on the economy." As noted above, the UNWTO started to perceive a decline in tourist business as the result of the crisis in June 2008 (UNWTO Barometer, October 2008), when the growth of international tourist arrivals fell by 2 per cent over the previous year. Stagnation or a slight decrease in international tourism was forecast for 2009 (UNWTO Barometer, January 2009), and the forecast proved to be correct. We should also point out that tourism in 2009 was, besides the financial crisis, most likely affected by the fear of the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus. According to the UNWTO (UNWTO Barometer, January 2010), international tourist arrivals in 2009 fell on a global and European level by 4.3%. Because of shorter holidays, holidays nearer home and lower tourist consumption on holidays, income from tourism fell even more than arrivals. As reported by the UNWTO, renewed growth in international tourism was perceived in 2010 (UNWTO Barometer, February 2011).

The global economic crisis was strongly reflected in Slovenian tourism in 2009. According to the Slovenian Tourist Board (Turistično ogledalo, 2010) there were 7 per cent fewer arrivals and 5 per cent fewer overnight stays in 2009 compared to the previous year. The Slovenian Tourist Board, in the Turistično ogledalo (March 2010), points to a different trend at Slovenian natural spas. The latter recorded 1 per cent more arrivals and overnight stays in 2009 compared to 2008. These good results were due mainly to a very large investment cycle of the preceding few years, which resulted in new modern facilities in accommodation and in the wellness facilities. In spite of the good results at Slovenian natural spas, the Slovenian Tourist Board noted that caution should be applied in interpreting the data, as growth occurred only among domestic guests.

At this point we should emphasize the modern definition of tourism after Kaspar (1996), which states "that tourism is the whole of the relations and features which result from the change of location and the stay of persons, for which the place of residence is neither the main and continuing place of residence nor living or employment" (Cvikl & Brezovec, 2006). In addition to the category of travel-seeking tourists is the category of business tourists, who are driven by business motives. As Davidson (1994) notes, "Business tourism deals with people who travel for reasons related to their work. As such, it represents one of the oldest forms of travel – travel for reasons related to trade." It would be wrong, however, to think of contemporary business tourism as consisting only of travel by independent businesspeople conducting a narrow range of activities.

2 Business tourism

Business tourism includes all types of business events occurring outside the participants' place of residence or employment. Within the tourism sector we can identify different types of events, for different target audiences. In general, a tourism event "is a term used mostly in the tourism literature to describe a destination development and marketing strategy to realize the potential economic benefits of events to the destination" (Getz, 2007). The subject of our study is business events, which include events held with the purpose of increasing the loyalty of stakeholders (e.g. incentive travel or trips, team building, meetings, treats), events with the purpose of increasing reputation and public image (e.g. important media events), celebrations (e.g. anniversaries, parties, New Year's parties), events with the purpose of communicating something to the wider public (e.g. press conferences), and assemblies (e.g. of shareholders) (Novak et al., 2009).

Destinations which organise and hold various types of business events are expected to have a diverse infrastructure to enable the smooth implementation of such events. One available venue type for business events is natural spas, where we carried out our research. Our review found that natural spas offer the infrastructure and programming suitable for business events. They mostly offer the hire of (conference) halls and other facilities as well as the possibility of catering, with some offering additional programming such as golf, sports activities, wellness, trips, and sightseeing. The added value of spas is that they combine ambience and various types of infrastructure in one place and are considered to be a refreshing type of location for business events. For these reasons and because the spas were the only tourism sector that recorded positive indexes in 2009 despite the crisis, we decided to carry out research at the natural spas.

2.1 Special events

The dictionary defines an event as "something that happens", which means that each individual's life can be viewed as an event or as a sequence of spontaneous or uncontrolled events. In our study we focus on events that are planned and managed for a special purpose. Events which Getz (2007) describes as temporal phenomena – which have an event programme or schedule generally planned in detail and are well publicised in advance – are called special events. For the purpose of our study, these are further defined as events whose purpose is to bring people together at a given time at a certain place for a particular purpose (Silvers, 2004). Shone and Parry (2004) describe an event as a phenomenon arising from an opportunity which is not routine and everyday, and which encompasses leisure (entertainment), cultural, personal or organisational goals that do not coincide with the routine activities of everyday life. The purpose of events, also described by Bowdin (1999), is to entertain, celebrate, educate or provoke certain experiences for a group of people. Some authors (Kotler, 1994; Goldblatt, 1997; Shone & Parry, 2001; AMA, 2004; Getz, 2007) focus on defining specific dimensions of events. Each definition exposes some key characteristics of special events, but none succeed in capturing them all. Shone and Parry (2004) outline these key characteristics as follows: uniqueness (even if an event repeats with the same purpose and goals and is intended for the same target audience, the interaction at the event is always different); perishability (special events have a beginning and an end); intangibility (special events offer experiences and stay in the minds of the participants only as a memory); interaction (among participants, between participants and the organiser, a brand or a product, etc.); ritual or ceremony (rituals are archetypes of ancient events and their elements are strongly present in all kinds of modern special events); labour-intensiveness (managing an event requires work from the moment when the need for an event emerges, through designing, planning and implementation of the event); ambience (special events take place at a chosen venue with a chosen ambience); and fixed time scales (a special event is a phenomenon defined by time, it has a beginning and an end). Based on our experience we would like to add purposefulness (a special event always happens due to the organiser's or investor's special purpose) and experience (a special event offers a special experience to the participants and the experience is even stronger if the participants are actively involved in the programme) to the list of key characteristics of special events.

2.2 Event management

Before we discuss event organisation, we need to look at the five domains of the event management process (EMBOK, 2005). The first domain is administration, which consists of financial management, human resources, information, procurement, stakeholders, systems and time. The second domain is design, which consists of content, theme, programme, environment, production, entertainment and catering. Third, we have a marketing domain, which consists of a marketing plan, materials, merchandise, promotion, public relations, sales and sponsorship. Operations is the fourth domain, and consists of attendees, communications, infrastructure, logistics, participants, site and technology. The last domain is risk, which is made up of compliance, decisions, emergency, health and safety, insurance, legal concerns and security.

Direct event planning is placed in the fourth domain of the event management process; operations. Rutherford Silvers (2004) says that event planning consists of successful implementation and management on an organisational level. Organisation is the logistical component of an event that brings the event to a successful conclusion. The key person here is the event organiser, who does not have much to do with the creative work (programming content). The organiser's main functions are searching for providers (of venues, catering, etc.) and subcontractors (e.g. musical groups, moderators); considering their offers; choosing the most suitable ones in terms of quality, references, scheduling and budget adequacy; and coordinating with the selected providers and subcontractors during event organisation and implementation.

Although at first glance the organiser's work may seem to be routine and operational, an efficient organiser must have a well-developed sense of judgement, as he/she often must make quick and intelligent choices (e.g. decisions on the necessary technical equipment for the event, decisions on stage height or decisions in the case of a malfunctioning microphone) to deliver an event as planned. The main component in his/her decision-making process is his/her experience in the event management field. Beside the organiser's responsiveness, flexibility and quick thinking, he/she must be well-organized and able to manage the time that he/she has for planning and implementation of the event. Since an organiser is in constant interaction with providers, subcontractors and clients during the organisational process, the importance of interpersonal skills soon becomes obvious. With the right mix of friendliness and fairness, an organiser can provide better prices and a higher quality of service while also ensuring the satisfaction of providers, subcontractors and clients.

3 Research problem

Many questions arose during our research on the impact of the financial crisis on the tourism and events management field. Primarily, however, we wanted to answer the question; what consequences were felt in the field of business events?

The aim of our study is to develop guidelines for business events management at the natural spas. The guidelines would offer efficient and optimised solutions in times of economic crisis for the organisation of the spas' activities and would be implemented via project management. The guidelines could enable faster, more efficient adjustments in programming and marketing at the natural spas during future crises.

The aim of the research process is to give an explanation (Knežević & Bizjak, 2009); our specific goal is to explain the functioning of the global economic crisis variable in the field of business events management at the natural spas.

4 Methodology

Research data were obtained by using a questionnaire that collected information about the purpose, number and type of business events held at natural spas. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part collected demographic data on sex, age, education, workplace and the respondents' role in business events management at the spa. The second part consisted of four questions on managing business events at the spa. The respondents entered data on the number of business events, number of business events with a single purpose, the type of events that were organised and the income generated by the business events, before the beginning of the global financial crisis (2008) and during the economic recession in 2009. Based on answers given, information was derived on the impact of the economic crisis on the number, purpose, type and income generation of business events at the natural spas.

Data collection took place at natural spas from March to June 2010, focussing on the organisers of business events. According to the Slovenian Spas Community trade organisation, there were 15 natural spas in Slovenia in 2009: Terme Čatež, Terme Dobrna, Terme Dolenjske Toplice, Thermana Laško, Terme Lendava, Terme 3000 Moravske Toplice, Terme Olimia Podčetrtek, Terme & Wellness LifeClass Portorož, Terme Ptuj, Zdravilišče Radenci, Zdravilišče Rogaška, Talaso Strunjan, Terme Šmarješke Toplice, Terme Topolšica and Terme Zreče. Some of these are part of large tourist enterprises (e.g. Sava Hotels & Resorts, Terme Krka). Eleven of 15 approached subjects (each from one of the 15 natural spas) agreed to participate in the study.

5 Findings

Findings indicated that the number of business events at natural spas in 2009 stayed the same as in 2008. No impact of the financial crisis on the number of business events at natural spas could be detected. Nevertheless, there was a change in the purpose of the business events held at natural spas in 2009. An increased number of business events were held to strengthen the loyalty of stakeholders (+10) and to communicate something to the wider public (+8) in 2009 compared to 2008. A decrease was recorded in business events with the purpose of celebration and / or entertainment (-10), business events with the purpose of reputation- and public image–building (-7) and business events concerned with matters of administrative order (-1).

There were also changes in the number of certain types of business events. An increase was recorded in events meant to build stakeholder loyalty (incentive travel, team building events, receptions and retreats) (+10), as well as in press conferences or other events designed to communicate something to the wider public (+8). The number of anniversaries, New Year's celebrations, parties, celebrations (-10), important media events (-7), shareholders' assemblies and meetings (-1) decreased.

In our study we wished to determine whether the volume of spending on business events decreased during the economic crisis, but respondents would not disclose such data due to its confidentiality.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

Events are definitely profitable, as they can combine a venue rental, overnight stays, catering, technical equipment and scenography rental as well as the hire of other profitable programming (e.g. hire of musicians, ordering trips). Organisations decided on business events to the same extent as in the years before the economic crisis, which can be attributed to the effectiveness of events as a tool for achieving communication and other business goals. However, the number of business events with a certain purpose changed – the number of business events with the purpose of increasing the loyalty of stakeholders (incentive travel or trips, team building, receptions, retreats) and events with the purpose of communicating something to the wider public (press conferences, etc.) increased. We believe that the offerings of Slovenian natural spas should be tailored to such events and that an effective relevant marketing strategy should be designed. Slovenian natural spas are not seen as overused destinations in the field of event management and therefore have an advantage over other venues. The added value of natural spas is their ambience as well as their infrastructure and activities, such as swimming pools, nature, wellness, health, etc. Spas need to shed their "pensioners" stereotype through redesigned packaging and effective marketing, which will enable them to shine as innovative, superior venues with diverse offerings in one setting. Incorporating other research on the recession's impact on business events (EIBTM, 2009; Budnar, 2009; Budnar, 2010) to create more specific guidelines for redesigning the natural spas' packages for business events, we would advise orientating towards protecting the environment, preserving cultural and natural heritage, prioritising sustainable development and emphasising high-quality services, quick response, high flexibility, interesting programming and ultimately lower prices.

Besides creating attractive, quality business packages, investments in relevant marketing will be necessary. We suggest an update of the spas' websites in a way to highlight the suitability of their offerings for business clients. When reviewing websites we found that many of them are deficient from the point of view of business event managers and organisers. Site pages with information on the rental possibilities of halls and other facilities are difficult to find. In the first instance the websites need to be redesigned so that business event packages are prominent on the home page, including easy links to relevant photographs and information on capacities, floor plans, photographs, technical equipment, catering, contact information and price lists. Křižaj and Črnigoj (2008) stress the importance of effective use of the Internet for marketing, noting, "Many organizations have already joined the virtual space for many different reasons, where gaining attention from a growing number of visitors is the main common issue. There are many similarities between virtual worlds and the real life tourism industry, so the question for tourist organisations is not if, but how to join this new, promising and indistinct, venture."

Marketing should also be carried out through other appropriate channels, such as e-mail, electronic or printed news, telephone, personal meetings, presentations at trade fairs and exhibitions, publishing in existing publications for the relevant target audiences, etc. When communicating with target audiences, at least the representatives of trade organisations and event management agencies etc. should be included, if not the key persons at convention bureaus and tourist agencies. Besides effective marketing, the key to success are good contacts, which natural spas can buy or obtain via networking, telephone data acquisition, developing existing relevant contacts, etc. Natural spas can also possibly begin by planning events for existing and potential business clients, where they can present their packages and capacities and obtain valuable contacts.

Vpliv gospodarske in finančne krize na poslovne dogodke v slovenskih naravnih zdraviliščih

Povzetek

V članku je predstavljen vpliv gospodarske in finančne krize, ki je Slovenijo uradno prizadela v letu 2009, na številčnost, namen, tip in proračun poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje v slovenskih naravnih zdraviliščih. Namen raziskave je oblikovanje smernic na področju organizacije poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje v slovenskih naravnih zdraviliščih. Raziskavo smo opravili med njihovimi predstavniki, ki imajo pri upravljanju dogodkov v zdravilišču aktivno vlogo. Podatke za raziskavo smo pridobivali z anketnim vprašalnikom, s katerim smo zbirali informacije o namenu in številčnosti poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje v slovenskih naravnih zdraviliščih ter o vrsti poslovnih dogodkov, ki jih podjetja organizirajo v njih.

Rezultati so pokazali, da se število poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje v slovenskih naravnih zdraviliščih v času gospodarske in finančne krize ni spremenilo. Spremembe pa smo zaznali v porastu nekaterih poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje, in sicer dogodkov z namenom dviga lojalnosti deležnikov in dogodkov z namenom sporočanja širši javnosti. Iz tega lahko sklepamo, da se organizacije tudi v kriznih časih zavedajo pomena trdnih, dolgoročnih in dobrih odnosov s poslovnimi partnerji za uspešno poslovanje.

Glede na donosnost poslovnih dogodkov za poslovne partnerje lahko za izboljšanje uspešnosti poslovanja vodstvom slovenskih naravnih zdravilišč svetujemo prilagoditev ponudbe. Skladno s tem je smiselno tudi ustrezno in učinkovito trženje tovrstne ponudbe, namenjene ključnim ciljnim javnostim.

Ključne besede: gospodarska kriza, finančna kriza, poslovni dogodek, poslovni partner, naravna zdravilišča

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original scientific article

Identifying resort tourism market segments based on visitor demographics: a study

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Abstract

This paper reports the findings of a study conducted in Goa, India, with the objective of segmenting resort visitors based on demographics. Four distinguishable segments are identified: relaxing regulars, tasters, honeymooners and exploring novices. Noticeably, these segments also provide vital insights into resort tourist motivation. Differences among the segments are identified and recommendations for resort marketing are provided.

Key words: Resort tourism, motivation, segmentation, marketing, India

1 Introduction

By the early 2000s, resort tourism had become a major form of tourism for many countries and destination areas (Agarwal, 2002). Resorts are not merely accommodation units but also attractions in themselves. While resorts resemble the traditional starred hotels in certain aspects, they differ markedly in their product and service offerings, observes Mill (2008). Resorts are often self-contained, and the recreation-rejuvenation opportunities that they offer are alone enough to attract visitors. Such opportunities tend to be unique in nature since they are normally developed based on the destination's characteristics (Lee, 2010). Resorts are constructed to provide tourists glimpses of the destination's exotic nature and culture while at the same time promising them safety, security, and comfort.

Tourists value verdant landscapes, easy access, and service quality while visiting resort destinations (Lee, 2009). It is generally accepted that tourist recreational behavior is conditioned by personal preferences for location and resort characteristics, personal and social factors, and preferred level of involvement in guest activity programs offered (Kyle et al., 2004). Resort visitor satisfaction levels are strongly linked with the resort product's variety and the quality of locational ambience available on-site (Beard & Ragheb, 1980; Manning, 1986; Fornell, 1992).

Tourism researchers have studied various dimensions of resort tourism. Of these, resort destination area life cycle is probably the most extensively examined (Agarwal, 2002; Butler, 1980; Di Benedetto & Bojanic, 1993; Tooman, 1997; Twining, Ward, & Baum, 1998). Yet life cycle studies constitute an area of hot disagreement among researchers. For example, an analysis by Prideaux (2000) highlighted several limitations of Butler's resort life cycle model. Cole (2009) transformed the traditional resort life cycle model into a chaotic model by means of a discrete logistic equation (DLE), which led him to suggest that tourism exhibits quite different dynamics from those captured by traditional growth models or localised demand-supply models. A quick survey of the literature reveals that diverse topics such as capacity management (Palmer and Mathel, 2010), ecosophic strategies to revive resort destinations threatened by climate change (Varley & Medway, 2010), resort design (Ayala, 1997), guest satisfaction (Sperdin & Peters, 2009), gender differences, and travel values of resort destination visitors (Meng and Uysal, 2008) have also been studied in the context of resort tourism.

Most of these studies use the term *resort* to mean resort destinations as a whole rather than particular resort hotels, although a few do use it to refer to specific properties such as resort hotels. Since *resort destination* is a more heterogeneous entity than particular resort hotels, analysis of the former often focuses on the macro level. Different tourism stakeholders within a single destination attract different types of tourists and, therefore, a singular segmentation model for the resort destination as a whole may turn out to be ineffective. Similarly, Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele, and Beaumont (2009) observed that the segments used by destination marketing organizations failed to describe tourist groups in terms of the services provided by tourism stakeholders in a destination area. In addition, resorts are no longer restricted to traditional resort tourism destinations: this makes it even more important to treat particular resort properties as the unit of analysis. In the present paper, we follow the latter approach.

2 Resort tourist segmentation

Segmenting tourists is a practically useful way of conceiving, designing, developing, and delivering tourism products to various clientele groups (Dodd and Bigotte, 1997; Snepenger, 1987). Segmentation informs the marketer what the customer wants and, therefore, is a key component of customer relationship management as well. Segmentation has been successfully employed at times as a basis for demarketing of tourism destinations, as in the case of Cyprus (Clements, 1989). Researchers like Haywood (1986) consider segmentation as a means of giving predictive power to resort area life cycle models, which are generally criticized as mere descriptive models.

The major marketing focus of many resorts all over the world is to increase the repeat visitation of patrons. Several tourism segmentation studies have based their clusters on different combinations of variables. For example, Kotler (1991), in his seminal study, arrayed 14 variables into four dominant categories, such as demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioural. While previous studies (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997; Field, 1999; Jeffrey & Xie, 1995; Kim et al., 2003) used demographics as their clustering base, a large number of tourism researchers have preferred to segment their samples based on other categories (see Jackson et al., 2003). In Morrison et al. (1996) patron differences among four types of resorts (viz: casino; beachside; mountain ski; and regional resort) were highlighted. In this study, a priori segmentation procedure was used, highlighting the behavior/destination nexus in the selection of resorts between the comparative groups. Significant statistical differences were noted in this research between resort clientele on the basis of their demographic, behavioural and psychographic characteristics. Demographic segmentation has the unique advantage of ease of segment identification and targeting from a managerial perspective, notes Inbakaran et al. (2005). Given this, the present study aims to segment resort tourists based on visitor demographics.

3 The study

3.1 Location

The study was conducted in Goa, India. Despite its small size, Goa boasts many resorts: a Google local search conducted by us identified at least ten tourist resorts. However, only a couple of these are of the all-inclusive type. Goa is the smallest state of India in terms of area (3,702 km^2 / 1,429.4 sq mi) but richest in terms of per capita income. Goa still exhibits the cultural influence of the Portuguese, who first landed in the early 16th century as merchants, and conquered it soon thereafter. The Portuguese overseas territory of Portuguese India existed for about 450 years, until it was annexed by India in 1961.

Renowned for its beaches, places of worship and world heritage architecture, Goa is visited by large numbers of international and domestic tourists each year (George, 2005). It also has rich flora and fauna, owing to its location on the Western Ghats range, which is classified as a biodiversity hotspot. Despite the occurrence of many ill effects of tourism (McCabe & Stocks, 1998), Goans, especially the majority Roman Catholic community, have wholeheartedly welcomed international inbound tourism development, since it gives them a unique opportunity to empathize or identify with their own colonial past (Newman, 1998). However, strains are evident in the community related to tourism development, and according to Wilson (1997), the Goan tourism scenario is a "plethora of paradoxes".

3.2 Data collection

Data for the present study were gathered from various resort front offices using self-administered questionnaires: given the difficulty of finding willing respondents, the convenience sampling technique was adopted. Research assistants waited at the resort front offices and asked respondents if they would participate in the study as they walked by. This sample of 286 individuals who participated in the study was dominated by males, who constituted 71.3 percent of the sample. The average age was 32.6 years, with a range of 18 to over 70 years. The sample had an average education level, with 59.1 percent having attained a tertiary qualification. About one-quarter of respondents were single, with couples equally distributed across all stages of the life cycle (from those with no children to those with adult children no longer living at home). About one-third of respondents were international visitors and nearly three-quarters were visiting resorts for the first time.

3.3 Research instrument

Based on an extensive review of the literature, industry expert opinions, and qualitative interactions with many resort tourists, a preliminary research questionnaire was developed with six well-delineated sections. The first five sections focused on resort visitors' reasons for resort selection, individual levels of satisfaction, opinion about resort vacationing, clientele preference on resort, and clientele preference for tourist behaviors. In these five sections, the statements were associated with a five-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The sixth section focused on the personal information of the clientele, including demographics and reasons for the current visit.

In the first part, titled *Reasons for selection,* item statements were provided to ascertain respondents' primary motivation for selecting a resort. Statements in this section included:

I have chosen this resort to holiday for its affordability.

I have chosen this resort to holiday as it suited my family needs.

I have chosen this resort to holiday due to its tourist product variety.

In the second part, titled *Levels of satisfaction,* the item statements included were designed to gauge resort visitors' level of satisfaction towards resort location, products, and services. The statements probed differences between visitors who appreciated the resort environment versus those who were keen about available guest activities that could keep them busily occupied during the stay. Some examples are given below:

This resort experience was totally novel and refreshing.

The resort guest activities were very imaginatively organized.

It was felt that the resort was infused with the spirit of its surroundings.

In the third part, titled *Resort opinions,* item statements were provided to allow the visitors to express their views about resorts. Examples of these statements include:

Coastal resorts are better suited to families with children and the elderly.

Resorts should not only focus on the affordable and the affluent.

Authentic resort experiences are possible only in remote and secluded resort locations.

In the fourth part, titled *Resort preferences,* resort visitors were given the opportunity to express preferences for various tourist resort activities. This involved statements that reflected the basic psychographics of visitors and included the following statements:

I would like to see more family oriented activities in resorts.

I would like to see more accommodation made available during peak seasons.

I would like to see resorts provide more opportunities for the visitors to mingle with local communities.

In the fifth part, titled *Behavior preferences,* preferences regarding tourist behaviors were explored. The items explored the basic psychographics among the resort visitors. It is normally construed that psychocentrics value safety and security, accommodation including facilities, and rest and relaxation. Allocentrics, on the other hand, prefer to engage in many recreational activities, being adventurous and meeting locals. Examples of statements determining psychographic type include:

I am adventurous and like to explore.

I seek novel and different destinations before others have been there.

I prefer familiar and known tourist destinations.

In the sixth and final section, questions were asked with a view to gathering essential demographic information as well as reasons for the current visit. The personal details of resort visitors were based on the following categories: gender (male, female); age (18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69 and 70 above); education level (completed primary, secondary, or tertiary); life cycle categories (young single, young couple/no children, young family (youngest child below 6 years), middle family (children aged 6–15 years), mature family, older couple/no children at home and mature single); country of origin; and whether patronage was a first visit or a revisit.

4 Data analysis

The collected data were coded into an SPSS data file for segmentation using a K-means cluster analysis (see Coakes & Steed, 1999). K-means quick cluster was chosen over hierarchical cluster because the sample was large (N < 200 cases) and the results were intended for practical applications (Coakes & Steed, 1999). The clustering base included gender, age, education, life c ycle, domestic versus international origin of the visitor, duration of resort patronage, and reasons for destination choice. A four-cluster solution appeared to be the most appropriate one (see table 1). This solution provided good separation among the groups on the clustering base variables (10 statistically significant group differences out of 13), acceptable cluster sizes (range 13.6%–43%), and allowed a meaningful and consistent interpretation. Cluster group differences were compared using Chi-square analysis (for nominal data) or one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (for interval and ratio data). Scheffe's post hoc test was preferred over Tukey's, as it is a more conservative measure that includes in its solution all possible pair-wise comparisons and adjusts the family-wise error rate to ensure minimisation of type-one errors (Hays, 1963).

All the major reasons for visiting resorts are seen to be above average, with the strongest three reasons being family relaxation, then safety and security, and third, accommodation and facilities. The profiles of each cluster are given below in table 1.

5 Discussion

Based on the variables that constituted each of the four clusters, we named the clusters as follows: relaxing regulars, tasters, honeymooners, and exploring novices. Each of these clusters had certain dominant characteristics, as described below:

5.1 Cluster #1 (Relaxing regulars)

Cluster #1 is the second-largest cluster (25.5%), has a gender balance reflecting the sample population, contains the oldest membership, and has the second-highest percentage of individuals with a tertiary education. This cluster has a significant number of overseas visitors. Cluster #1 has the highest percentage of mature age people, both singles and couples with adult children. Their major reason for choosing a resort destination was the opportunity to relax. Their rankings of others reasons were consistently lower than the average of the total sample, indicating a lack of interest in resort facilities (including accommodation), active recreation, scenery and tranquility, family issues, and issues of safety and security. Cluster #1 is made up of mature age people without families who

Table 1: *Summary of base variables constituting the four-cluster solution*

		Clusters			
Variables	**Overall sample**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
N (%)	286(100)	73 (25.5)	39(13.6)	51 (17.8)	123(43)
Gender (% males) $\chi 2 = 18.89$, df = 3, $p < 0.05$	73.1	72.6	51.3	62.7	80.5
Age (years) $F(3, 282) = 151.6$, $p < 0.001$	32.6	47.1	37.8	23.7	26.0
Education (% tertiary) $\chi 2 = 21.49$, df = 6, $p < 0.05$	59.1	67.1	71.8	45.1	56.1
Life cycle (%)					
- single	18.9	2.7	5.1	51.0	19.5
- couple/no children	26.2	6.8	2.6	31.4	43.1
- young family	11.2	4.1	10.3	13.7	14.6
- middle family	17.8	17.8	43.6	3.9	15.4
- mature family	15.0	38.4	28.2	0	3.3
- mature couple/no children	4.5	15.1	2.6	0	0.8
- mature single	6.3	15.1	7.7	0	3.3
$\chi 2 = 188.0$, df = 18, $p < 0.01$					

International tourists (%) $\chi 2 = 8.97$, df = 3, $p < 0.05$	32.5	46.6	25.6	29.4	27.6
Duration of patronage (%) - very first time - < 10 years - > 10 but < 20 years - > 20 years $\chi 2 = 5.00$, df = 9, non-significant	 73.1 23.4 2.1 1.4	 68.5 27.4 2.7 1.4	 66.7 30.8 2.6 0	 76.5 21.6 0 2.0	 76.4 19.5 2.4 1.6
Reasons were ranked, the lower score the more important the reason.					
Reason: family relaxation $F(3, 282) = 2.86$, $p < 0.05$	3.81	4.03	3.92	3.61	3.75
Reason: scenic and tranquil $F(3, 282) = 3.47$, $p < 0.05$	3.61	3.26	3.90	3.74	3.70
Reason: safe and secure $F(3, 282) = 2.75$, $p < 0.05$	3.68	3.67	3.97	3.82	3.54
Reason: recreation $F(3, 282) = 1.02$ non-significant	3.44	3.26	3.44	3.47	3.55
Reason: accommodation $F(3, 282) = 2.08$ non-significant	3.65	3.63	3.97	3.80	3.54
Reason: convenience $F(3, 282) = 2.97$, $p < 0.05$	3.31[*]	3.29	3.44	3.69	3.15
Reason: combine adventure with normal $F(3, 282) = 3.07$, $p < 0.05$	3.60	3.32	3.92	3.67	3.59

are not interested in being active or adventurous, but wish to rest and relax.

5.2 Cluster #2 (Tasters)

Cluster #2 is the smallest cluster (13.6%), has equal numbers of males and females, an average age in the mid-to-late 30s, and includes a large proportion of couples with dependent children of all ages. This cluster is the highest in repeat visitors to the resort, who rank highly all the following reasons for choosing this destination: scenery, tranquility, safety and security, accommodation and facilities, and combining adventure tourism with normal tourist activity. This group appears to be focused on what the resort has to offer families in terms of facilities and utilities.

5.3 Cluster #3 (Honeymooners)

Cluster #3 size is small (17.8%), is the youngest on average (23.6 years), but has a membership of young singles or young couples without children. They have the lowest education level (but may still be studying) and include the highest percentage of first-time visitors to the resort. As their reason for resort choice, this cluster group gave the lowest rank to the resort providing a good place for the family to relax and rejuvenate, but above average rankings on scenery and tranquility, safety and security, opportunities for active recreation, and accommodation. Cluster #3 indicated low rankings for combining adventure with normal tourist activity while in the resort.

5.4 Cluster #4 (Exploring novices)

Cluster group #4 made up nearly one-half (43%) of the resort population, had the highest percentage of males, was the second-youngest group and was below average in education. The membership included young couples and young-to-middle-aged families. This cluster was average in terms of re-visitations and overseas visitors. While they ranked resort holidays highly on convenience and recreational opportunities, they were below average in their ranking for safety and security reasons and accommodation and facilities.

A big question for resort management is whether it should strive to become everything for each of these identified segments or whether it should focus more on the benefits sought by only one of these segments. In fact, segmentation efforts are largely useless if we do not employ them as a basis for targeted marketing. Equally important for resort management to address are questions such as whether a particular market segment is sizeable and lucrative enough to target; how far in time the demand from this segment would sustain; how inimitable the products sought by this segment are; and how much new investment would be required. Another key issue for existing resorts that decide to focus on the well-defined needs of particular market segments is how to use the resources and facilities they already possess: some of these resources and facilities might have benefited from significant investments, and resort owners–stockholders are unlikely to accept the abandonment of such resources and facilities because the selected customer segment does not want them (Palmer & Mathel, 2010). Yet it has been observed that segmentation-based marketing, properly devised, can lead to better conservation of natural and other resources around the resort (Warnken et al., 2003).

6 Concluding remarks

Generally speaking, the leisure-scape ambience and the combined recreational activity spectrum are some of the major determinants of visitor satisfaction and continued patronization of resorts (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001). Yet, in order to build a large pool of loyal clientele, resort management must pay more attention to the specific motives and quality expectations of particular customer groups (Petrick, 2004). To achieve this, resorts need to group their customers on the basis of attributes that can help predict customer attitude and behaviour. Thus, segmentation becomes an important tool in the hands of the resort marketer.

The segments identified in the present research are not universal. However, because the segments identified are the result of a clustering process based on empirical data rather than a set of predetermined, a priori criteria, they have more meaning for local action. The demographic basis of the segmentation achieved as part of our research makes it easy for practicing managers to identify customer groups without processing complex and largely intangible psychographics.

Tržna segmentacija turistov na podlagi demografske analize obiskovalcev: študija

Povzetek

V prispevku so predstavljene ugotovitve študije, opravljene v kraju Goa v Indiji, z namenom segmentiranja obiskovalcev letovišča na podlagi demografske razčlembe. Opredeljeni so štirje razpoznavni segmenti: redni obiskovalci, ki prihajajo z namenom sprostitve; t. i. "degustatorji", mladoporočenci in vedoželjni novinci. Ti segmenti nudijo tudi jasen in bistven vpogled v vprašanje turistične motivacije. Prispevek opredeli razlike med naštetimi segmenti in poda priporočila glede marketinških tehnik, ki so letovišču na voljo.

Ključne besede: letovišča, turizem, motivacija, segmentacija, marketing, Indija

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c) Miscellaneous: Whenever possible, use the SI units (Système international d'unités).

d) The **title page** should include the title of the article (no more than 85 characters, including spaces), full name of the author(s), affiliation (institution name and address) of each author clearly identified; linked to each author by use of superscript numbers, corresponding author's full name, telephone, and e-mail address.

e) The authors are obliged to prepare two **abstracts** – one short abstract in English and one (translated) in Slovene language. For foreign authors translation of the abstract into Slovene will be provided.

The content of the abstract should be structured into the following sections: purpose, methods, results, and conclusion. It should only contain the information that appears in the text as well. It should contain no reference to figures, tables and citations published in the main text, and should not exceed 250 words.

f) Beneath the abstract, the authors should supply appropriate **Keywords** (max 6) in English and in Slovene. For foreign authors the translation of the abstract into Slovene will be provided.

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

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

i) Captions are required for all **Figures** and shall appear on a separate manuscript page, beneath table captions. Each figure should be saved as a separate file without captions and named as Figure 1, etc. Files should be submitted in *.tiff or *.jpeg format. The minimum object size should be 17x20 cm and a resolution of at least 300 dpi per size is preferred. Combinations of photo–line art and greyscale images should be saved at 600–900 dpi. Lettering (symbols, letters, and numbers) should be between 8 and 12 points, with consistent spacing and alignment. Font face may be Serif (Times Roman) or Sans Serif (Arial). Line width should be ¾ point or greater. Any extra white or black space surrounding the image should be cropped. Ensure that subject-identifying information (i.e., faces, names, or any other identifying features) is cropped out or opaqued. Prior to publication, the author(s) should obtain all necessary authorizations for the publication of the illustrative matter and submit them to the Editorial Board. When referring to the figures and tables in the main text, use the following style: (Figure 1, Table 1). The articles will be printed in black and white.

j) References

The journal uses the Harvard reference system (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed., 2001). see also: http://www.apastyle.org). The list of references should only include works that are cited in the text and that have been published or accepted for publication. Personal communications and unpublished works should only be mentioned in the text. References should be complete and contain all the authors (up to six) that have been listed in the title of the original publication. If the author is unknown, start with the title of the work. If you are citing a work that is in print but has not yet been published, state all the data and instead of the publication year write "in print".

Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work. Do not use footnotes or endnotes as a substitute for a reference list. Titles of references written in languages other than English should be additionally translated into English and enclosed within square brackets. Full titles of journals are required (not their abbreviations).

Examples of reference citation in the text:

<u>One author:</u> Tourism innovation specific is mentioned (Walker, 2007) or Walker (2007) had concluded ...

<u>Two authors:</u> This result was later contradicted (Walker & Allen, 2008) or Walker and Allen (2008) pointed out ...

<u>Three to five authors</u>:

a) first quotation of source: Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2009) had found ... or (Bradley, Ramirez & Soo, 2009)

b) Second quotation of source: Bradley et al. (2009) or (Bradley et al., 2009)

<u>Six or more authors:</u>

We quote only the first author: Kalthof et al. (1999) or (Kalthof et al., 1999).

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

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

Examples of reference list:

The style of referencing should follow the examples below:

<u>Books</u>

Buhalis, D. (2003). *eTourism: information technology for strategic tourism management*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

<u>Journals</u>

Smeral, E. (2009). The impact of the financial and economic crisis on European tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, *48*(1), 3–13.

Dwyer, L. (2006). Assessing the economic impacts of events: A computable general equilibrium approach. *Journal of Travel Research, 45*(1), 59–66.

Papatheodorou, A., Rosselló, J., & Xiao, H. (2010). Global economic crisis and tourism: Consequences and perspectives. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(1), 39–45.

<u>Chapters in Books</u>

Bruland, K., & Movery, D. C. (2006). Innovation through time. In J. Fagerberg, D. C. Mowery, & R. R. Nelson (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of innovation* (pp. 349–379). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rossi, T., & Cassidy, T. (in press). Teachers' knowledge and knowledgeable teachers in physical education. In C. Hardy, & M. Mawer (Eds.), *Learning and teaching in physical education*. London: Falmer Press.

<u>Chapters in Published Books of Conference Proceedings</u>

Volo, S. (2004). Foundation for an innovation indicator for tourism: An application to SME. In P. Keller, & Th. Bieger (Eds.), *AIEST 54th Congress: The Future of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Tourism Vol. 46* (pp. 361–376). St. Gallen, Switzerland: AIEST.

<u>Theses</u>

Sedmak, G. (2006). *Pomen avtentičnosti turističnega proizvoda: primer destinacije Piran. ["The importance of the authenticity of the tourist product: the case of destination Piran." In Slovene].* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of economics.

4. Manuscript submission

The main manuscript document should be saved as a Word document and named with the first author's full name and the keyword *manuscript*, e.g. *"Name_Surname_manuscript.doc"*. Figures should be named as *Figure1, Figure2, etc.*

The article should be submitted via e-mail: academica@turistica.si

Reviewing process communication will proceed via e-mail only.

5. For additional information regarding article publication, please do not hesitate to contact the Editorial Board.

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