

Luštický, Martin; Gunina, Daria; Oberhel, Martin

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Multi-Criteria Approach for Measuring Stakeholder Perception on the Impacts of Tourism Policy

Martin Luštický^a, Daria Gunina^b, Martin Oberhel^c

^aSenior Lecturer and Researcher, University of Economics, Prague; Faculty of Management, Department of Management, 1117 Jarosovska Str., Jindrichuv Hradec, 37701, Czech Republic

^bPh.D. Student, University of Economics, Prague; Faculty of Management, Department of Management, Jindrichuv Hradec, Czech Republic

^cPh.D. Student, University of Economics, Prague; Faculty of Management, Department of Management, Jindrichuv Hradec, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the role stakeholders have in the tourism development process, this paper focuses on assessing tourism impacts related to the tourism policy priorities from the point of view of destination stakeholders in three well-known tourism destinations in the South Bohemian Region in the Czech Republic. Its aim is to analyze stakeholder perception of tourism impacts and identify such priorities which have the greatest anticipated impacts on developing a given destination. The research is based on a mix of qualitative research approach and innovative application of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). The representatives of three stakeholder groups provide the researchers with information about the importance of economic and non-economic tourism impacts and contributions of tourism policy's strategic priorities to four categories of tourism impacts. Based on comprehensive data analysis, the researchers construct a three-level hierarchical structure mapping the importance of various tourism impacts, then sorting the priorities with respect to stakeholder preferences, and finally identifying a gap between the actual and preferred orientations of tourism policy. In such a way, the paper offers a comprehensive recipe for local governments which can be instrumental in realizing tourism policy while being able to promote the most important impacts of tourism on destination's development from the point of view of destination stakeholders.

Keywords: Tourism destination, Stakeholder, Tourism impact, Tourism policy, AHP

1. Introduction

According to UNWTO (2016), the number of international tourist arrivals increased by 4.6 % in 2015. The travel & tourism sector shows nearly double

growth when comparing with growth in the volume of world merchandise trade which slowed was 2.6 % in 2015 (WTO, 2017). As many authors emphasize, the tourism sector has multiple positive effects on tourism destinations in terms of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental spheres (e.g. Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal, 2002; Lu, Wu & Xiao, 2006; Brida, Osti & Faccioli, 2011; Vanhove, 2011; Styliadis, Biran, Sit & Szivas, 2014; Mazhenova, Choi & Chung, 2016). Sharma (2004) characterizes the effects of tourism as the positive outcomes of processes in a territory that have an influence on the developing

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† Martin Luštický

Senior Lecturer and Researcher, University of Economics, Prague;
Faculty of Management, Department of Management, 1117
Jarosovska Str., Jindrichuv Hradec, 37701, Czech Republic
Tel. 00420 384 417 7220 E-mail: martin.lusticky@vse.cz

new possibilities for local inhabitants, increasing utilities of local economies and decreasing some negative phenomena.

Governments try to promote the positive impacts of tourism through their tourism policy. Tourism policy can be considered as a specific public policy that aims to support development objectives relevant to tourism established at the local, regional or national levels (Chuck, 1997). The main reason for tourism policy is to create “the environment which provides maximum benefits to regional stakeholders while minimize the negative impacts of tourism” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003, p. 148). The defined goals and results are implemented through the planning process, resulting in a set of strategy documents (plans). In such a way, the government defines basic orientation of tourism development in a given territory (tourism destination). As many authors note, the planning process enables the destination to enhance its competitiveness and maximises the benefits of tourism at the same time (e.g. Evans, Campbell & Stonehouse, 2003; Edgell, DelMastro, Smith & Swanson, 2008; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012).

The key part of the strategic planning process is the implementation of the strategy. Poister and Streib (1999) note that both realization and subsequent monitoring are crucial for the success of a strategy as a whole; without them the entire process loses its purpose. Buhalis (2000), Hall (2008), Ritchie and Crouch (2003) also emphasise the importance of the involvement of regional stakeholders in the strategic planning process, strategy implementation and monitoring. The involvement of regional stakeholders is widely considered as one of the main principles for achieving sustainable tourism development and a long-term competitive advantage (Kozak, 2004; Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Byrd, Cárdenas & Greenwood, 2008).

Buhalis (2000) points out that managing tourism with the involvement of regional stakeholders is extremely difficult for destination management. As he noted, quite a number of stakeholder groups with various interests, complex mutual relations and different willingness to cooperate within the realization

stage of a strategy occur in a given destination. Nevertheless, destination management should not surrender its coordination and realization role, as it is the only way destination management can effectively influence the sustainable development of tourism (Buhalis, 2000; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

This paper focuses on the set of problems related to destination stakeholder’s involvement in strategic planning. The research reflects one of the problems associated with implementation of tourism policy laying in a divergence between the orientation of tourism policy set by the local government and the preferred orientation of the policy from the point of view of destination stakeholders. According to Byrd, Bosley and Dronberger (2009), this divergence should lead to lower stakeholders’ support for tourism in a destination as the basic principle of social exchange theory is not observed.

The paper’s aim is to draft and verify a methodology based on applying a multi-criteria approach for measuring stakeholders’ perception of the impact of tourism caused by implementation of tourism policy in a given tourism destination. The paper tries to find a way how to contribute towards a quality enhancement of tourism policy in three well-known Czech tourism destinations. It offers a comprehensive procedure which can be instrumental for the local government in realizing such tourism policy, while promoting the most important impacts of tourism from the point of view of primary destination stakeholders who are directly affected by tourism policy.

II. Literature Review

As Ritchie and Crouch (2003) note in their model of competitiveness, an attractive, efficient and highly competitive destination cannot exist only by pure coincidence. This requires a well-planned environment that supports and enables the development of tourism. The key to this environment are factors such as policy making and strategic planning. Tourism policy can

be considered to be specific public policy, the aim of which is to support development objectives relevant to tourism that has been established at the local, regional or national level (Chuck, 1997). Freyer (2001, p. 269) uses a more precise definition which defines tourism policy as “targeted, organized planning, influencing reality and the future of tourism through various stakeholders (public, private and multinational)”. According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2012, p. 327), the purpose of tourism policy is to “ensure that visitors are hosted in a way that maximizes the benefits to stakeholders while minimizing the negative effects, costs, and impacts associated with ensuring the success of the destination”. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) see the main role of tourism policy in its ability to state the right direction for tourism development and define “basic rules of the game” for all stakeholders. They consider tourism policy as for the price for “creating an environment which provides maximum benefits to regional stakeholders while minimize the negative impacts of tourism” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003, p. 148).

There is the need to apply strategic planning when developing effective tourism policy and incorporate policy goals and priorities in the development plans at the same time (Page, 2013). This means that creating tourism policy and strategic planning are directly related to each other. They both deal with the future development of tourism and emphasize the strategic dimension of tourism management (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). Tourism policy tends to focus on the macro-level, while strategic planning focuses on the micro-level and pays attention to implementing policy priorities (Page & Connell, 2009).

Stakeholder Involvement in the Strategic Planning Process

Edgell et al. (2008, p. 297) describe the strategic planning process in tourism as “a process aimed to optimize the benefits of tourism so that the result is a balance of the appropriate quality and quantity of supply with the proper level of demand, without compromising neither the locale’s socioeconomic and

environmental development, nor its sustainability”. Hall (2008) sees the role of strategic planning in maximizing the benefits of tourism for local stakeholders thanks to improving the competitive position of tourism destinations.

The strategic planning process can be broken down into the following phases: (a) defining basic presumptions; (b) external and internal analysis; (c) setting strategic targets; (d) selecting an appropriate strategy and (e) implementing the strategy. Implementation is frequently considered to be the most critical phase of the planning process which determines the success of the whole strategy (e.g. Poister & Streib, 1999; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Hall, 2008; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Morrison, 2013).

A number of authors (e.g. Buhalis, 2000; Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Byrd, Cárdenas & Greenwood, 2008; Hall, 2008; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Morrison, 2013) stress the importance of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning, primarily in the implementation phase. Moreover, some authors consider the involvement of stakeholders as an inevitable condition for successfully implementing the strategy, achieving sustainable tourism development and gaining the benefits of tourism for the destination (Byrd, Cárdenas & Greenwood, 2008; Bahar & Kozak, 2008; Vanhove, 2011).

Buhalis (2000) points out that managing tourism with the involvement of the regional stakeholders is extremely difficult for destination management. Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher (2005) summarize a number of challenges such as increased costs of management processes, the difficulty in identifying legitimate stakeholders, and the limited capacity of stakeholder participation. The OECD (2012, p. 9) emphasizes the role of regionally-based destination management organizations (DMOs) which “often co-ordinate government and private sector actors at a sub-national level” and thus “they provide the basis for developing stakeholder networks for policy development”. As Page (2013) notes, this effort requires the complex coordination of various interests of the stakeholders. Nevertheless, quite a number of stakeholders with various interests, complex mutual relations and different willingness to cooperate in implementation of the

strategy occur in a given destination.

Stakeholder Perception on the Impacts of Tourism

The previous chapter clearly indicates that understanding of interests of the stakeholders and their active participation in the strategic planning process are vital conditions for successful destination management. Byrd, Bosley and Dronberger (2009, p. 694) see a link between “stakeholders’ attitudes towards and support for tourism in their community” and “their evaluations of the actual and perceived outcomes tourism has in their community”. They point out to this link within the context of the social exchange theory, which “suggests people evaluate or exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange” (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005, p. 1061).

Nowadays, there is common agreement on three categories of the impacts of tourism - (a) economic, (b) socio-cultural and (c) environmental. Despite this fact the particular research designs to their examination differ significantly. As Styliadis, Biran, Sit and Szivas (2014) noted, it is possible to distinguish (a) the cost-benefit approach focused on positive and negative impacts of tourism, (b) the domain related costs-benefits approach which provides more comprehensive analysis of tourism impact taking into consideration both the nature (positive/negative or cost/benefit) and domain (economic, socio-cultural, environmental) of impacts, and (c) the non-forced approach focused on relationship between perceived impacts and support of tourism development by asking residents for their perceptions of the extent to which they consider tourism to have a positive or negative impact on community life.

The non-forced or stakeholder approach has been gaining increasing attention in tourism literature over the last thirty years. This approach is closely related to the concept of sustainable tourism development. Tourism has been seen as a means to sustain use of natural resources, social and cultural development

of a local community, and provide income and economic security for a destination and its stakeholders (Styliadis, Biran, Sit & Szivas, 2014). However, tourism has the potential to create both positive and negative impacts. That is why a number of authors (e.g. Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Hall, 2008; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Morrison, 2013) point out that tourism development must be planned and managed responsibly in such a way to generate positive impacts for destination stakeholders.

Byrd and Gustke (2004) find a perceived impact to be one of the main predictors for the support of stakeholders for sustainable tourism development in their community. Therefore, understanding the perception of stakeholders towards the impacts of tourism, their attitude, interests and overall willingness to support the development of tourism is considered to be a crucial key to sustainable development of tourism in a destination (Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009). Kuvan and Akan (2012, p. 572) suggest that the process of “identifying the perceptions and attitudes of various stakeholders toward tourism development in a community should be taken as a first step in tourism planning in order to ensure trust, cooperation, harmony and mutual benefit for all those involved”. Therefore, many researchers have examined the perceptions of stakeholders on the impacts of tourism on their communities in the hopes of better understanding them (e.g. Brida, Osti & Faccioli, 2011; Styliadis et al., 2014; Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy & Vieregge, 2015).

III. Method

The research aim is to draft a procedure based on non-forced stakeholder approach for measuring stakeholders’ perception of the impact of tourism caused by implementation of tourism policy, and verify it in a three well-known Czech tourism destinations. To be able to meet the main aim, the researchers have identified the following research questions:

RQ1: How do destination stakeholders perceive the importance of various tourism impacts in regard to the development of tourism?

RQ2: How do destination stakeholders perceive the contribution of tourism policy priorities in terms of generating the impact of tourism?

RQ3: Is it possible to identify a gap between tourism policy realized by local governments and its preferable orientation as declared by destination stakeholders?

The research methodology is based on a mix of qualitative research approach and a non-traditional application of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) for examining stakeholders' perception on the impacts of tourism and identification of such priorities which have the greatest anticipated impacts. The methodology can be broken down into the following steps:

ST1: Definition of the impacts of tourism (benefits) for tourism destination;

ST2: Definition of the main stakeholder groups (data source; respondents);

ST3: Specification of the data collection method;

ST4: Specification of the data assessment method.

The research is realized in tourism destinations in the South Bohemian Region in the Czech Republic. The region covers the area of 10,056 km², making it the second-largest region of the Czech Republic. This region ranks among the most visited regions in the Czech Republic with more than 1.4 million guests staying in accommodation facilities (CZSO, 2017). The research covers three well-known city tourism destinations located in eastern part of the region: Jindřichův Hradec, Třeboň, and Slavonice.

Step 1: Definition of the Tourism Impacts for Tourism Destination

The research methodology is based on three traditional categories of the impacts of tourism: (a) economic, (b) socio-cultural and (c) environmental. Moreover, it adds the fourth category of the administrative impacts which was defined by Ritchie (1984), the importance of which was tested by Luštický, Oberhel and Gunina (2016). Based on the

classification of Gursoy and Rutherford (2004), Andereck et al. (2005), Sharma and Dyer (2009), and Prayag, Dookhony-Ramphul and Maryeven (2010) these broad categories are sub-divided into particular tourism impacts in the following way:

- The economic impacts: (a) investment opportunities, (b) business opportunities, (c) employment opportunities, (d) income for residents and local government;
- The socio-cultural impacts: (a) improving public infrastructure and public services, (b) improving recreational facilities, (c) preserving local culture and traditions, (d) restoring historical buildings and monuments;
- The environmental impacts: (a) preserving natural resources, (b) preserving fauna and flora, (c) residents' environmental awareness, (d) environmental education;
- The administrative impacts: (a) better collaboration between stakeholders, (b) prolonging the stay of visitors in a destination, (c) reducing the tourist off-season season, (d) higher awareness about a destination.

Step 2: Definition of the Main Stakeholder Groups

The term stakeholder was defined by Freeman who considered stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman 1984, p. 46). This classical definition has been modified many times; we can find dozens of various definitions in the literature.

The research considers stakeholders to be organizations that operate in the destination influenced by the development plan, which directly participate in fulfilling tourism policy priorities, or are substantially affected by these priorities, and thus can be considered as primary stakeholders. The research intentionally omits residents who are indirectly affected by tourism policy, and thus can be considered as secondary stakeholders. With respect to this limitation, the

particular stakeholder groups are compiled based on an approach of Buhalis (2000), Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie (2005), and Morrison (2013) as follows:

- Private providers of accommodation services;
- Private and public providers of tourism services;
- Departments of municipal office.

Such stakeholder groups fully reflect four characteristics of useful segmentation of stakeholders which were mentioned by Byrd and Gustke (2006, p. 178): (a) measurability, (b) accessibility, (c) substantiality, and (d) actionability. The stakeholder groups correspond with the above-mentioned definition; they are active participants in planning tourism development; they are substantially influenced by tourism policy; they are typical for the Czech tourism destinations, and it is possible to identify a sufficient number of particular representatives of the groups within the territory.

Table 1 shows the structure of the stakeholder groups which representatives serve as the respondents of the research survey. The ratio is the proportion between the total number of stakeholders in a given stakeholder group in a particular destination and the number of respondents. The research covers between 25 % - 100 % of stakeholders in all pre-defined groups. As mentioned earlier, the research is based on a mix of qualitative research approach and application of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), and its primary aim is to draft a corresponding methodology. This is why the researchers decided to focus on semi-

structured interviews with relatively small stakeholder groups to be able to fully understand their answers and properly assess the methodology.

Step 3: Specification of a Data Collection Method

The data were collected by the means of semi-structured interviews with representatives of stakeholder groups. This data collection method is typical for non-forced approach to examining the perception of stakeholders on the impacts of tourism (e.g. Haley, Snaith & Miller, 2005; Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma & Carter, 2007; Styliadis, Biran, Sit & Szivas, 2014; Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy & Vieregge, 2015). It enables researchers to explain all information about the research to the respondents, react to their questions, and clearly understand their answers within the context of the specific environment of a particular destination.

The survey consists of three phases: (a) comparing the economic, socio-cultural, environmental and administrative tourism impacts according to their importance for stakeholders, (b) assessing the priorities of tourism policy embodied in the development plans on the basis of their contribution to previously mentioned impacts, and (c) identifying the negative impacts of tourism policy for developing the tourism destination (additional voluntary question). The data were recorded into prepared questionnaires following

Table 1. Structure of Respondents

| Stakeholder Group | Jindřichův Hradec | | Třeboň | | Slavonice | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | Number of respondents | Ratio (%) | Number of respondents | Ratio (%) | Number of respondents | Ratio (%) |
| Private providers of accommodation services | 2 | 22.2 | 2 | 18.2 | 2 | 25.0 |
| - Hotel | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 25.0 |
| - Guest house | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 16.6 | 1 | 25.0 |
| Private and public providers of tourism services | 3 | 50.0 | 4 | 50.0 | 1 | 50.0 |
| - Castle | 1 | 100.0 | 1 | 100.0 | not relevant | |
| - Museum, gallery, rental service and others | 2 | 40.0 | 3 | 42.8 | 1 | 50.0 |
| Municipal office | 1 | 100.0 | 1 | 100.0 | 1 | 100.0 |
| - Department of Culture and Tourism | 1 | 100.0 | 1 | 100.0 | 1 | 100.0 |

the survey structure and enabling relatively effortless conversion into a format suitable for applying a multi-criteria method.

Step 4: Specification of a Data Assessment Method

The data obtained from the first phase of the survey were assessed by the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) as a representative of the multi-criteria methods. We can find various applications of the multi-criteria decision-making methods in the tourism sector and related branches (e.g. Chou, Hsu & Chen, 2008; Ip, Law & Lee, 2012; Chien-Chang, 2012; Lin & Lu, 2013; Powers & Kocakülâh, 2015). However, specific applications of the AHP in stakeholder management are quite unusual and innovative.

A detail description of the Analytic Hierarchy Process methodology is beyond the extent of this paper. It can be found e.g. in Saaty and Vargas (2001), or Bhushan and Rai (2004). The research uses AHP methodology consisting of the four main steps below which are based

on general MADM procedure described in Tzeng and Huang (2011):

- Setting up a hierarchical system of the criteria and sub-criteria in a form of tourism impacts (Table 2);
- Pairwise comparison of the criteria and sub-criteria on Saaty’s scale of relative importance (Table 3);
- Organizing the pairwise comparisons into Saaty’s square matrix (pairwise comparison reciprocal matrix);
- Calculating the normalized vector of weights $w = (w_1, \dots, w_n)$ in which every i -th element represents the importance of the i -th criterion.

The data assessment from the second phase was realized by the means of five-point Likert scale in which the score indicates a contribution rate of the i -th variant to fulfilment of the criteria C.1.1 - C.4.4 in the following way:

- Likert score 0.00: There is no link between the action and particular tourism impact at all;
- Likert score 0.25: There is a slight link between the action and particular tourism impact;

Table 2. Hierarchical Structure of the Criteria

| C.0 Tourism impacts for tourism destination | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| C.1 Economic impacts | C.2 Socio-cultural impacts | C.3 Environmental Impacts | C.4 Administrative Impacts |
| C.1.1 Investment opportunities | C.2.1 Improvement of the public infrastructure and public services | C.3.1 Preservation of natural resources | C.4.1 Better collaboration between stakeholders |
| C.1.2 Business opportunities | C.2.2 Improvement of the recreational facilities | C.3.2 Preservation of fauna and flora | C.4.2 Prolongation of visitors’ stay in a destination |
| C.1.3 Employment opportunities | C.2.3 Preservation of local culture and traditions | C.3.3 Residents’ environmental awareness | C.4.3 Reduction of a slack tourist season |
| C.1.4 Income for residents and local government | C.2.4 Restoration of historical buildings and monuments | C.3.4 Environmental education | C.4.4 Higher awareness about a destination |

Table 3. Saaty’s Scale for Pairwise Comparison

| Intensity | Definition | Explanation |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Equal importance | Two activities contribute equally to the objective |
| 3 | Weak importance of one over another | Experience and judgement slightly favor one activity over another |
| 5 | Essential or strong importance | Experience and judgement strongly favor one activity over another |
| 7 | Demonstrated importance | An activity is strongly favored and its dominance is demonstrated in practice |
| 9 | Absolute importance | The evidence favoring one activity over another is of the highest possible order of affirmation |

- Likert score 0.50: There is a moderate link between the action and particular tourism impact;
- Likert score 0.75: There is a strong link between the action and particular tourism impact;
- Likert score 1.00: There is an extremely strong link between the action and particular tourism impact.

The variants are represented by the following tourism policy priorities described in a form the actions (A) which are embodied in these city development plans:

- Strategic Development Plan of the City of Jindřichův Hradec for a Period of 2015-2020: A.2.1.1.2 Entrepreneurship in Tourism Sector, A.2.2.1.1 City Destination Management, A.2.2.2.1 Variety of Tourism Services, A.2.2.2.2 Sacral Historic Sight, A.2.2.3.1 Cooperation between Destination Stakeholders, A.2.3.1.1 Marketing and Communication;
- Strategic Development Plan of the City of Třeboň for a Period of 2008-2020: A.4.1.1.A Development of City Spa, A.4.1.1.B Expansion of Spa & Wellness Facilities, A.4.1.1.C Human Resources in Spa & Wellness Facilities, A.4.2.1.A Accommodation & MICE Services, A.4.2.1.B Secondary Tourist Facilities, A.4.2.2.A Collaboration & Information Exchange, A.4.2.2.B City Destination Management;
- Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of the City of Slavonice for a Period of 2016-2021: A.2.1.1 Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Tourism Sector, A.2.1.2 PPP Projects in Tourism Sector,

- A.2.1.3 Cooperation & Communication between Destination Stakeholders, A.2.2.1 Destination Marketing, A.2.2.2 Tourism Information Portal, A.2.2.3 Congress Tourism, A.2.2.4 Restoration of Historical Buildings & Monuments, A.2.2.5 Restriction of the Gambling Houses in Historic Centre of the Town.

IV. Results

The findings are described for each particular destination in Tables 4-6 and Figures 1-3 in a structure following the research questions (RQ1-RQ3). The findings are presented in a form of mean values calculated from an assessment of all stakeholders involved into the survey. The grey color (tables) indicates: (a) significant importance of particular tourism impact, (b) strong link between the action and particular tourism impact. The red color (figures) indicates negative correlation (gap) between tourism policy realized by the local government and its preferable orientation declared by destination stakeholders. On the contrary, the green color (figures) indicates positive coherence between implementation of tourism policy and stakeholders' point of view.

The tables include Cronbach's alpha values for all variants (actions) assessed by stakeholders. This

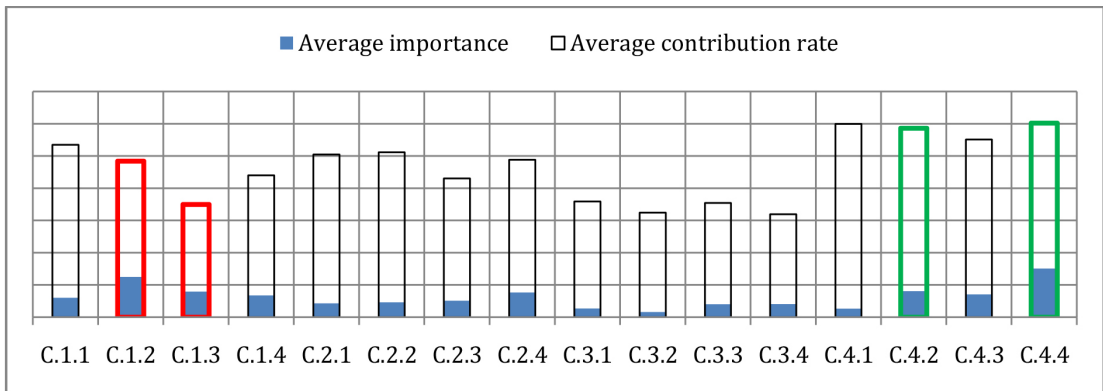


Figure 1. Jindřichův Hradec: Tourism Policy Coherence

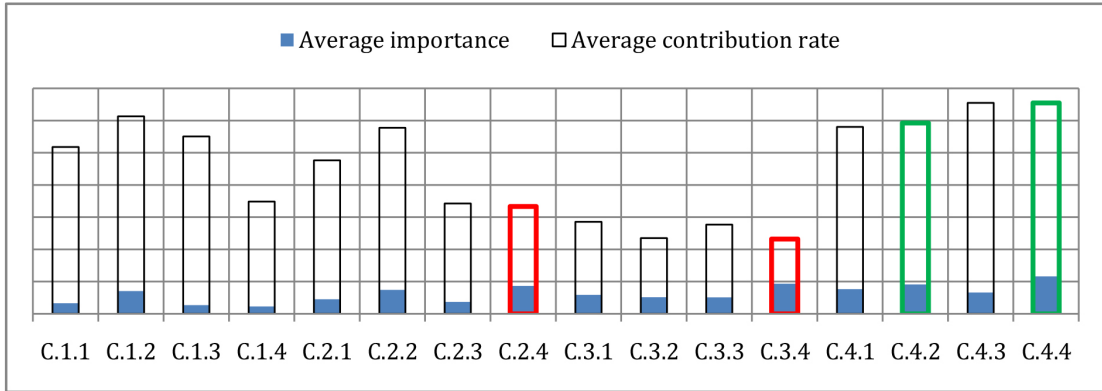


Figure 2. Třeboň: Tourism Policy Coherence

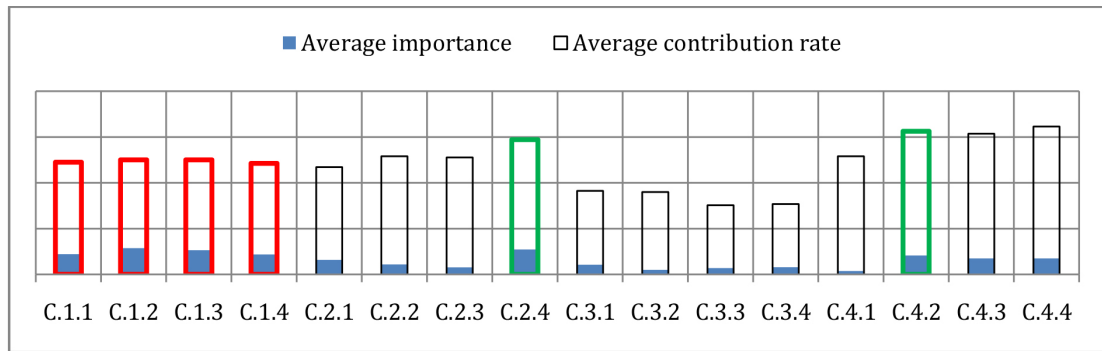


Figure 3. Slavonice: Tourism Policy Coherence

method is suitable and commonly used for testing with partial credit and for questionnaires using a Likert scale. It measures the internal consistency of the test. A commonly-accepted rule of thumb is that an alpha of 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability and 0.8 or higher indicates good reliability.

Thanks to carefully prepared questionnaires and the method of semi-structured interviews with stakeholders the researcher shows very good overall reliability of the answers: Jindřichův Hradec ($\alpha = 0.989$), Třeboň ($\alpha = 0.960$), Slavonice ($\alpha = 0.973$).

V. Discussions

The link between the strategic priorities (actions)

and the perceived impacts of tourism is not so strong. If we use a verbal form of the Likert scale, the link can be described as slight or moderate with the value frequently oscillating within the interval $<0.3; 0.7>$. The reason for this fact should lie in the relatively broad formulation of the priorities and their heterogeneity. Therefore, the respondents were not able to see direct / strong contribution of a particular action to the main impacts of tourism.

The findings concerning particular impacts of tourism correlate with theory (e.g. Vanhove, 2011) and research studies (e.g. Dyer et al., 2007; Sharma & Dyer, 2009; Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy & Viergege, 2015). Tourism policy in selected tourism destinations tends to be aimed at the economic impacts in the first place. It is intensively focused on reaching the “classic” tourism impacts in the economic sphere - creating investment (C.1.1) and business (C.1.2)

Table 4. Jindřichův Hradec: Average Importance of Tourism Impacts & Contribution Rate of the Actions

| Average importance of tourism impacts / Contribution rate of the actions | | A.2.1.1.2 | A.2.2.1.1 | A.2.2.2.1 | A.2.2.2.2 | A.2.2.3.1 | A.2.3.1.1 |
|--|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Economic impacts 0.332 | C.1.1 Investment opportunities: 0.060 | 0.569 | 0.556 | 0.458 | 0.458 | 0.625 | 0.542 |
| | C.1.2 Business opportunities: 0.125 | 0.556 | 0.486 | 0.556 | 0.292 | 0.528 | 0.486 |
| | C.1.3 Employment opportunities: 0.079 | 0.458 | 0.319 | 0.333 | 0.319 | 0.306 | 0.361 |
| | C.1.4 Income for residents and local government: 0.068 | 0.528 | 0.319 | 0.486 | 0.514 | 0.389 | 0.403 |
| Socio-cultural impacts 0.216 | C.2.1 Improving public infrastructure and public services: 0.043 | 0.764 | 0.431 | 0.694 | 0.417 | 0.444 | 0.278 |
| | C.2.2 Improving recreational facilities: 0.046 | 0.681 | 0.542 | 0.528 | 0.514 | 0.597 | 0.208 |
| | C.2.3 Preserving local culture and traditions: 0.051 | 0.375 | 0.486 | 0.458 | 0.486 | 0.375 | 0.403 |
| | C.2.4 Restoring historical buildings and monuments: 0.076 | 0.528 | 0.528 | 0.431 | 0.722 | 0.403 | 0.319 |
| Environmental impacts 0.123 | C.3.1 Preserving natural resources: 0.027 | 0.486 | 0.444 | 0.292 | 0.153 | 0.417 | 0.361 |
| | C.3.2 Preserving fauna and flora: 0.016 | 0.278 | 0.528 | 0.250 | 0.278 | 0.333 | 0.278 |
| | C.3.3 Residents' environmental awareness: 0.040 | 0.361 | 0.500 | 0.292 | 0.236 | 0.403 | 0.333 |
| | C.3.4 Environmental education: 0.040 | 0.431 | 0.389 | 0.333 | 0.194 | 0.236 | 0.333 |
| Administrative impacts 0.329 | C.4.1 Better collaboration between stakeholders: 0.027 | 0.556 | 0.625 | 0.708 | 0.347 | 0.750 | 0.611 |
| | C.4.2 Prolonging the stay of visitors in a destination: 0.081 | 0.639 | 0.681 | 0.597 | 0.556 | 0.528 | 0.514 |
| | C.4.3 Reducing the tourist off-season season: 0.071 | 0.528 | 0.583 | 0.472 | 0.514 | 0.611 | 0.597 |
| | C.4.4 Higher awareness about a destination: 0.151 | 0.625 | 0.639 | 0.500 | 0.486 | 0.569 | 0.792 |
| Cronbach Alfa | | 0.945 | 0.927 | 0.948 | 0.948 | 0.956 | 0.926 |

opportunities and thus creating the conditions for new job opportunities (C.1.3) as well. However, their average contribution rate does not fully reflect their importance from the point of view of destination stakeholders, which is why the negative tourism policy gaps can be identified there in the case of Jindřichův Hradec and Slavonice.

Tourism policy in all of the destinations examined also reflects the socio-cultural and environmental impacts. The average contribution rate of the socio-cultural impacts is almost at the same level as in the case of the economic impacts. The importance of socio-cultural impacts for destination stakeholders is slightly lower than in the case of economic impacts. The exception is represented by restoring historical buildings and monuments (C.2.4), which dominates

this category. The average contribution rate varies in examined destination, and thus we can identify both a negative (Třeboň) and positive (Slavonice) correlation between realizing tourism policy and generating this impact.

The lowest average contribution rate is clearly visible in the case of the environmental impacts. Although the concept of sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism development has been applied in tourism management over the last two decades and has been stressed by many authors (e.g. Kuvan & Akan, 2012; Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2013; Mazhenova, Choi & Chung, 2016), the environmental pillar is still underestimated both from the point of view of policy makers and stakeholders. Only destination stakeholders in Třeboň indicate different

Table 5. Třeboň: Average Importance of Tourism Impacts & Contribution Rate of the Actions

| Average importance of tourism impacts / Contribution rate of the actions | | A.4.1.1.A | A.4.1.1.B | A.4.1.1.C | A.4.2.1.A | A.4.2.1.B | A.4.2.2.A | A.4.2.2.B |
|--|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Economic impacts 0.152 | C.1.1 Investment opportunities: 0.033 | 0.500 | 0.792 | 0.313 | 0.667 | 0.771 | 0.146 | 0.438 |
| | C.1.2 Business opportunities: 0.071 | 0.542 | 0.771 | 0.563 | 0.646 | 0.792 | 0.396 | 0.583 |
| | C.1.3 Employment opportunities: 0.027 | 0.521 | 0.833 | 0.667 | 0.750 | 0.542 | 0.167 | 0.375 |
| | C.1.4 Income for residents and local government: 0.023 | 0.333 | 0.458 | 0.208 | 0.458 | 0.438 | 0.146 | 0.396 |
| Socio-cultural impacts 0.243 | C.2.1 Improving public infrastructure and public services: 0.045 | 0.500 | 0.604 | 0.396 | 0.417 | 0.646 | 0.250 | 0.521 |
| | C.2.2 Improving recreational facilities: 0.074 | 0.667 | 0.667 | 0.563 | 0.521 | 0.688 | 0.229 | 0.708 |
| | C.2.3 Preserving local culture and traditions: 0.037 | 0.354 | 0.396 | 0.104 | 0.146 | 0.354 | 0.292 | 0.750 |
| | C.2.4 Restoring historical buildings and monuments: 0.087 | 0.417 | 0.375 | 0.083 | 0.292 | 0.333 | 0.167 | 0.667 |
| Environmental impacts 0.255 | C.3.1 Preserving natural resources: 0.059 | 0.479 | 0.250 | 0.063 | 0.125 | 0.250 | 0.271 | 0.563 |
| | C.3.2 Preserving fauna and flora: 0.051 | 0.271 | 0.208 | 0.063 | 0.083 | 0.250 | 0.250 | 0.521 |
| | C.3.3 Residents' environmental awareness: 0.051 | 0.375 | 0.271 | 0.104 | 0.188 | 0.271 | 0.313 | 0.417 |
| | C.3.4 Environmental education: 0.093 | 0.313 | 0.188 | 0.104 | 0.208 | 0.229 | 0.271 | 0.313 |
| Administrative impacts 0.350 | C.4.1 Better collaboration between stakeholders: 0.076 | 0.354 | 0.563 | 0.313 | 0.500 | 0.458 | 0.938 | 0.938 |
| | C.4.2 Prolonging the stay of visitors in a destination: 0.091 | 0.521 | 0.646 | 0.479 | 0.688 | 0.542 | 0.500 | 0.771 |
| | C.4.3 Reducing the tourist off-season: 0.066 | 0.729 | 0.688 | 0.354 | 0.729 | 0.729 | 0.563 | 0.792 |
| | C.4.4 Higher awareness about a destination: 0.116 | 0.833 | 0.750 | 0.354 | 0.708 | 0.563 | 0.458 | 0.917 |
| Cronbach Alfa | | 0.805 | 0.955 | 0.654 | 0.786 | 0.904 | 0.685 | 0.752 |

perception of the environmental impacts and assign them a higher level of importance. Unfortunately, these views on the impacts are not reflected when implementing tourism policy, and thus the negative tourism policy gap occurs in the case of environmental education (C.3.4).

While the findings mentioned were in correlation with theoretical pieces of knowledge, the findings concerning the administrative impacts go beyond a theory. Although this kind of impacts was defined by Ritchie in 1984, it is not included in majority of the research studies. We can find some indirect

references in the theory of destination management (e.g. Buhalis, 2000; Evans, Campbell & Stonehouse, 2003), destination competitiveness (e.g. Ritchie & Crouch, 2003), or in some practical research oriented on stakeholder management (e.g. Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Brida, Osti & Faccioli, 2011). The research proves the legitimacy of this specific category and its importance for destination stakeholders. These impacts can be ranked among the most important ones for stakeholders. They almost unanimously claim the ability to prolong the stay of visitors in a destination (C.4.2) and higher awareness about the

Table 6. Slavonice: Average Importance of Tourism Impacts & Contribution Rate of the Actions

| Average importance of tourism impacts / Contribution rate of the actions | | A.2.1.1 | A.2.1.2 | A.2.1.3 | A.2.2.1 | A.2.2.2 | A.2.2.3 | A.2.2.4 | A.2.2.5 |
|--|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Economic impacts 0.395 | C.1.1 Investment opportunities: 0.088 | 0.417 | 0.458 | 0.292 | 0.750 | 0.583 | 0.625 | 0.542 | 0.250 |
| | C.1.2 Business opportunities: 0.115 | 0.542 | 0.583 | 0.500 | 0.583 | 0.500 | 0.500 | 0.458 | 0.333 |
| | C.1.3 Employment opportunities: 0.106 | 0.500 | 0.625 | 0.458 | 0.583 | 0.458 | 0.625 | 0.500 | 0.250 |
| | C.1.4 Income for residents and local government: 0.087 | 0.417 | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.708 | 0.625 | 0.583 | 0.500 | 0.292 |
| Socio-cultural impacts 0.247 | C.2.1 Improving public infrastructure and public services: 0.063 | 0.542 | 0.625 | 0.375 | 0.542 | 0.500 | 0.500 | 0.375 | 0.292 |
| | C.2.2 Improving recreational facilities: 0.044 | 0.500 | 0.583 | 0.375 | 0.583 | 0.625 | 0.583 | 0.500 | 0.375 |
| | C.2.3 Preserving local culture and traditions: 0.031 | 0.458 | 0.500 | 0.375 | 0.583 | 0.542 | 0.625 | 0.583 | 0.417 |
| | C.2.4 Restoring historical buildings and monuments: 0.109 | 0.667 | 0.667 | 0.417 | 0.583 | 0.542 | 0.625 | 0.750 | 0.458 |
| Environmental impacts 0.121 | C.3.1 Preserving natural resources: 0.042 | 0.417 | 0.458 | 0.375 | 0.458 | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.333 | 0.125 |
| | C.3.2 Preserving fauna and flora: 0.020 | 0.500 | 0.458 | 0.375 | 0.458 | 0.375 | 0.333 | 0.292 | 0.083 |
| | C.3.3 Residents' environmental awareness: 0.027 | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.292 | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.333 | 0.292 | 0.000 |
| | C.3.4 Environmental education: 0.031 | 0.417 | 0.417 | 0.292 | 0.375 | 0.333 | 0.333 | 0.292 | 0.000 |
| Administrative impacts 0.237 | C.4.1 Better collaboration between stakeholders: 0.014 | 0.500 | 0.625 | 0.583 | 0.542 | 0.542 | 0.625 | 0.625 | 0.083 |
| | C.4.2 Prolonging the stay of visitors in a destination: 0.083 | 0.750 | 0.750 | 0.542 | 0.667 | 0.708 | 0.750 | 0.667 | 0.167 |
| | C.4.3 Reducing the tourist off-season: 0.070 | 0.708 | 0.792 | 0.542 | 0.667 | 0.667 | 0.750 | 0.625 | 0.167 |
| | C.4.4 Higher awareness about a destination: 0.070 | 0.750 | 0.833 | 0.583 | 0.708 | 0.708 | 0.750 | 0.667 | 0.167 |
| Cronbach Alfa | | 0.792 | 0.818 | 0.885 | 0.912 | 0.913 | 0.917 | 0.969 | 0.934 |

destination (C.4.4) as the main preconditions for reaching the economic impacts. It is possible to appreciate a very positive correlation between realizing tourism policy and generation of these impacts which the green color in all figures clearly indicates.

If we concentrate on the overall aim of tourism policy, we can find the strongest links between tourism policy priorities and the administrative and economic impacts as described in Figure 4. The administrative impacts are considered to be the preconditions for reaching the economic impacts which have the greatest importance for destination development, and thus the ability to influence stakeholder support of tourism policy in the greatest extent (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004).

Finally, the research proves the significance importance of understanding stakeholder perception towards the impacts of tourism as a crucial key to sustainable development of tourism in a destination. As Byrd and Gustke (2004) note, a perceived impact is one of the main predictors for stakeholder support for sustainable tourism development in their community. Kuvan and Akan (2012, p. 572) suggest that the process of “identifying the perceptions and attitudes of various stakeholders toward tourism development in a community should be taken as a first step in tourism planning in order to ensure trust, cooperation, harmony and mutual benefit for all those involved”. Likewise, Gursoy and Rutherford (2004, p. 495) note that understanding of the roots of stakeholder attitudes

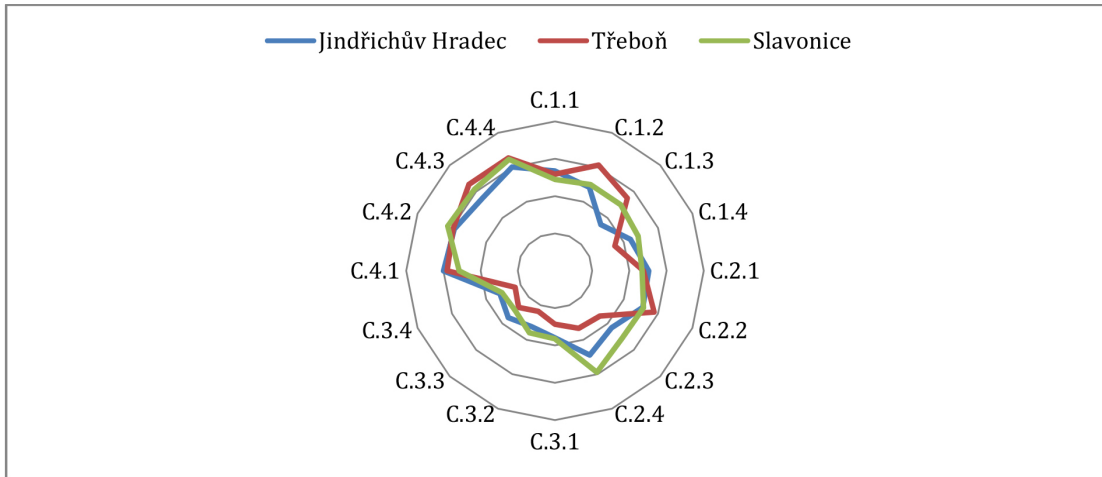


Figure 4. Orientation of Tourism Policy

to tourism development is a crucial piece of knowledge for government planners and policymakers, because “the success and sustainability of any development depends on active support of the local populations”.

VI. Conclusions

The research has successfully met its aim and has been able to answer all research questions. It was able to draft a methodology allowing sorting tourism impacts according their importance for destination stakeholders (RQ1), and later that sorting the strategic actions devoted to tourism development according their contribution to economic and non-economic benefits for destination stakeholders (RQ2). In such a way it was possible to identify a gap between tourism policy and its preferable orientation as declared by destination stakeholders (RQ3).

Although we can identify the following research limitations which must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings, the results can serve as an indicator for orientation of such local tourism policy which will be able to promote the most important impacts of tourism on destination development:

- Small sample of respondents focused purely on

primary stakeholders directly involved by tourism policy priorities which are described in the development plans;

- Rough and simplified assessment of the link between the strategic priorities (actions) and perceived tourism impacts by the Likert scale;
- Identification of the tourism policy gap based on average figures without reflecting on the specifics of the external and internal environments of destinations;
- Absence of subsequent qualitative research resulting in a deeper knowledge of application of tourism policy and management & marketing in a given destination.

In general, the findings emphasize the necessity of strategic planning and stakeholders’ involvement in the strategic process to achieve sustainable competitive advantage of tourism destinations. They also stress a coordination role of the destination management organizations (DMOs) within this context. Their role should lie in supporting stakeholders’ activities and finding a way how to cooperate on tourism development.

When implementing tourism policy, the DMOs should take the stakeholders’ preferences and needs into account. It should consult the stakeholders about tourism policy intents, and thus try to seek a consensus which will be beneficial for all destination stakeholders and will meet their expectation concerning tourism

policy benefits in the economic and non-economic sphere.

However, this effort can be considered as one the most demanding. Stakeholders' interests are often focused on their own goals and show high level of heterogeneity which results in a low willingness to co-operate with the DMOs. Besides that, stakeholders usually declare lack of financial capacity and time for active participation in tourism development. So, the DMOs must find an answer to the question how to activate their stakeholders and promote their activities contributing to fulfilment of tourism policy priorities.

The answer should lie in application of a complex stakeholder analysis covering these steps: (a) stakeholder identification and mapping, (b) stakeholder characterization by set of attributes reflecting their perception of tourism policy, tourism impacts and taking into consideration their willingness to cooperate on tourism development at the same time, and (c) stakeholder prioritization based on the attributes.

Such stakeholder analysis has the potential to become the basis for formulating a set of recommendations in the sphere of (destination) stakeholders management & marketing designated for destination management organizations which should lead to an improvement of co-operation between stakeholders and thus to an achievement of destination's competitive advantage.

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