

“Organized Events: an Opportunity for Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises”

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Abstract

The paper analyses how often Slovak residents attend organized tourism events and which tourism services related to organized events they typically use. It is based on an extensive representative research. Tourism events are, on annual average, attended by majority of the Slovak population. Catering services in the events venues are used by more than three quarters of the attendants. Slovak residents also use accommodation, transportation, cultural and social or other services, and thus contribute to the profits of the local enterprises. Therefore organized events represent an important opportunity not only for development tourism in the respective territory, but also for the small and medium-sized enterprises prevailing in tourism sector.

Key words: *attendants, events, tourism services*

Paper Type: *Scientific paper*

Preface

Organized events have attracted people from time immemorial [Jago & Dwyer, 2006]. The first Olympic Games that took place in 776 B.C. can be considered the oldest instance. However, the boom of both tourism and organized events has only been observed after WW2. That period of time was characterized not only by constant global growth of the events number, but also by heterogeneous types of events lasting for just several hours or even several months. The interest in the organized events expanded at the end of 20th century when (in 1987) the concept of event tourism was established. It shows connection between tourism and organized events, which increase its dynamics, i.e. invigorate somewhat static offer of the territory. At the same time, they temporarily stimulate visitation of a destination, and incite its further development through interim attractiveness which they represent.

The concept of tourism events has been examined by several domestic and foreign authors, such as Ritchie & Beliveau [1974], Gartner & Holecsek [1983], Formica [1998], Gúčík [2001], Janeczko et al. [2002], Hede et al. [2003], Cegielski et al. [2004], Deery et al. [2005], Fredline et al. [2006], Jago & Dwyer [2006], Getz [2008, 2012], Kmeco [2007], Jones et al. [2008], Stokes [2008], Macfarlane & Jago [2009], Musgrave & Raj [2009], Robinson et al. [2010], Bowdin et al. [2011], Lović et al [2012], Walker [2012], Coghlan, Filo [2013], and others. Janeczko et al. [2002], who studied the economic effects of the events on the example of four festivals, claim the

events mainly help boost profits of businesses and create jobs, but also improve transport accessibility of the destination, increase the number of accommodation facilities and informedness of potential investors. Musgrave & Raj [2009] consider some other positive economic effects of events, like a growing number of visitors, prolongation of their stay and, consequently, prolongation of the destination season, boosted direct and indirect tourism revenues, increased tax revenue (value added tax, local taxes), increased value of real estate in the event venue, business development, construction development, stimulation of local production and related job creation. In this connection, Getz [2012] mentions strategic partnerships, winning grants and other resources, as well as using services of local suppliers, which can be related to a multiplier effect and local economy growth.

In this context, it is important to investigate the attendance ratio of the organized events and tourism services of the destination typically used by the attendants while participating in the events. Pursuant to the results, we can rate the events as an opportunity for the small and middle-sized enterprises which are most common in tourism destinations.

1. Objective and Research Material

The objective of the treatise is to explore tourism services typically used by the Slovak residents during the organized events, and thus rate the events as opportunities for small and

middle-sized enterprises located in the destinations. Since the available literature failed to provide a comparable study, the results of the research were compared to the results of a less survey one conducted in the Czech Republic.

Our research was done in the first quarter of 2013. The selection of respondents was deliberate, taking the age and gender structure of the basic sample (Slovak population) into account. From 839 completed questionnaires, 23 invalid ones were excluded in the first sorting. Then the acquired data were transliterated, and a data matrix was compiled in the Excel spreadsheet processor. After checking the sample representativeness by the Chi-Square test for goodness of fit in the PASW SPSS programme, other 42 questionnaires were excluded from the research. The final representative sample then consists of 774 respondents, who represent Slovak population as for the aspects of age (p -value=0.994) and gender (0.732), according to the Chi-Square test for goodness of fit.

The research in the Czech Republic was conducted with an identical questionnaire in the first quarter of 2013. The sample consisted of 124 Czech residents. Chi-Square test for goodness of fit was used for testing representativeness of the Czech Republic residents sample from the aspects of age and gender. P-value results (0.525, or 0.980) have confirmed our assump-

tion. Therefore research conclusions can be generally applied to the basic sample.

The collected data on participation of individuals in the organized tourism events and services used by them were processed by selected mathematical and statistical methods. Statistical tests were evaluated with 95 % reliability, i.e. at $\alpha=0.05$ significance level.

2. Research Results and Discussion

Organized Events Attendance

At the first stage we aimed to find out how frequently the residents of Slovakia and the Czech Republic attend organized tourism events. The organized events are, on annual average, attended by 97.7 % Slovak respondents, while more than a half of them (52.1 %) attend them several times a year (Table 1). In comparison with the Czech Republic, where organized events are attended by 97.6 %, there is approximately the same level of participation. Only 8.1% of the Czech respondents participate in the events rarely, 55.6 % several times a year, 25.8 % several times a month, and 8.1 % on a weekly basis. We assume that this is connected to their active participation in the events (i. e. engagement in the programme), or support of their relatives' performance.

Table 1 Frequency of the Slovak respondents' participation in the organized events

Type of event	Respondents' attendance of events ratio, in %				
	Never	Rarely	Several times a year	Several times a month	Weekly
Cultural events	6.46	33.07	52.07	6.59	1.81
Religious events	63.70	21.83	10.59	1.55	2.33
Sports events	30.75	31.52	24.68	9.56	3.49
Business events	42.38	36.69	17.31	2.84	0.78
Socio-political events	83.20	12.92	3.23	0.65	0.00
Multi-theme events	57.36	31.65	9.43	1.16	0.39
Other events	57.36	31.65	9.43	1.16	0.39
Average frequency of the respondents participation in the events, in %	2.32	18.73	55.81	16.54	6.60
Frequency of the Slovak citizens' participation in the events, in %	1-3	16-21	52-59	14-19	5-8

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outcomes.

After generalization of the sample results to the population of Slovakia, statistic induction with 95% reliability was used to determine the fact that, on annual average, 97 to 99 % of the Slovak population attend the organized events. More than three quarters (76 to 82 %) of the Slovak residents attend events at least several times a year, out of it 52 to 59 % several times a year, 14 to 19 % several times a month, and 5 to 8 % weekly. They prefer mainly cultural events (92 to 95 % attendance of the population), the least attended events are socio-political ones (only 14 to 19 % attendance of the Slovak population). We presume it is related to their occasional occurrence and predominantly one-off periodicity.

Location Preferences

Another investigated feature was the respondents' preference of events organized in their place of residence, or elsewhere. The results highlight the fact that, with an exception of business events, Slovak respondents prefer attending the events in their place of residence (26.9 % rarely, 50.3 % several times a year, 14.1 % several times a month, and 6.1 % weekly), which complies with the theoretical resources of the organized events research. As for the Czech respondents, their intensity of local events attendance is slightly higher (15.3 % rarely, 54% several times a year, 22.6 % several times a month, 6.5 % weekly).

Despite the prevailing attendance of the local events, we can conclude that organized tourism events are not attended, on annual average, only by 10 % of the Slovak respondents. The reason for the absence of the Slovak residents in the organized events outside their place of residence is mainly their bad financial situation related to a high average unemployment rate, and low disposable income. To a lesser extent, there is also lack of time, health problems, different preferences in free time activities and other reasons (unattractive offer of the events, missing information about the attractive events, missing company, higher age). The biggest part of the Slovak respondents (41.9 %) attends tourism events several times a year (Table 2).

As for the Czech respondents, we can state slightly higher intensity of participation in the tourism events. Only 8.1 % of the respondents do not attend them at all, more than a half (56.5 %) attends them several times a year (while 54 % attend

events without overnight stay and 33.9 % events with overnight stay).

With 95 % probability, we have specified that tourism events are attended by 88 to 92 % of the Slovak residents (87 to 91 % attend trips and 65 to 72 % stays). Here we can see a gap in the domestic tourism market to be filled with more intensive use of organized events.

Higher attendance of individuals has been observed at the events without overnight stay in the venue (Table 2), which is the consequence of small area of Slovakia and relative closeness of the attendants' places of residence. While tourism events without overnight stay are attended at least several times a year by 46 to 54 % of the Slovak residents, events with overnight stay take only 23 to 29 %. Almost half of the Slovak population (40 to 47 %) attends the organized events with overnight stay only rarely.

Table 2 Frequency of Slovak respondents' participation in the organized tourism events

Event attendance	Respondents ratio, in %				
	Never	Rarely	Several times a year	Several times a month	Weekly
In tourism	9.95	37.60	41.86	8.91	1.68
Thereof					
- trips	10.72	39.28	39.92	8.66	1.42
- stays	31.40	43.02	22.61	2.20	0.78
Event attendance	Slovak residents ratio, in %				
	Never	Rarely	Several times a year	Several times a month	Weekly
In tourism	8-12	34-41	38-45	7-11	1-3
Thereof					
- trips	9-13	36-43	36-43	7-11	1-2
- stays	28-35	40-47	20-26	1-3	0-1

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outcomes.

Services Utilization

In the second part of the research we tried to find out which services are typically used by the Slovak respondents during their stay in the event venue, when it is different from their place of

residence. The results are documented in the Table 3. In comparison with the Slovak respondents, the asked ones from the Czech Republic use services more; the only examples are sports and recreation, spa and intermediary services (Table 3).

Table 3 Services used in the organized events venues

Services	Respondents ratio, in %	Slovak residents ratio, in %	Czech respondents ratio, in %
Accommodation	59.07	55-63	75.89
Catering	79.61	77-83	97.32
Transport	43.1	39-47	59.82
Information	26.86	24-30	33.93
Guiding	8.86	7-11	10.71
Animating	5.77	4-7	6.25
Sport and recreation	29.11	26-32	22.32
Cultural and social	29.96	27-33	34.82
Spa	20.68	18-24	16.07
Congress	5.91	4-8	9.65
Assistance	1.83	1-3	3.57
Organizing	5.63	4-7	7.14
Intermediary	3.52	2-5	2.68

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outcomes.

With probability of 95 %, we can say that more than three quarters of the population of Slovakia (77 to 83 %) use catering services in the attended event venue. Accommodation, transport, cultural and social, sports and recreation ones are used to a lesser extent. Since catering and accommodation services, which are used by more than a half of the Slovak population when attending tourism events, are paid ones, we can conclude that attending events evokes extra tourism expenditures which stabilizes and expands local services market and develops businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

With the single-factor dispersion analysis, we have tested dependence of accommodation and catering services utilization on demographic, economic and geographic characteristics of the Slovak respondents.

The result is that utilization of catering services depends on education (p-value=0.036, F=2.265), marital status (p-value=0.000, F=6.086), size of settlement (p-value=0.003, F=3.279) and region (p-value=0.012, F=2.598) of which the individuals are permanent residents. Catering services are then mostly utilized by people with higher education and, presumably, higher income (85.8 % respondents with master's degree and 83.1 % respondents with bachelor's degree), who are or were married (82.9 % married and 81.2 % divorced respondents), come from towns with the population of 5 to 25 thousand (87.7 % respondents), localized mainly in the Košice region (90 % respondents).

We have also identified a proven impact of gender (p-value=0.001, F=10.342), their current economic activity (p-value=0.016, F=2.475) and the size of settlement (p-value=0.004, F=3.244) in which they live on utilization of accommodation services in the event venue. Given services are mostly used by men (65.8 % respondents), self-employed persons (76.4 % respondents) and individuals with permanent residence in a town with the population of 100 to 250 thousand inhabitants (82.1 %).

Product Type Preferences

We wanted to know whether the respondents prefer purchasing basic product of the event that covers only the entrance fee, or a complex product providing, apart from admission, a choice of additional services (e.g. catering, transport), or a gift of selected goods (e.g. CDs, souvenirs etc.).

The results have shown that a complex product is only preferred by 32.7 % of the Slovak respondents; the basic one is preferred by 67.3 %. In the case of the Czech respondents, the

results are similar – the basic product is required by 60.5 %, the complex product is preferred by 39.5 %.

Based on the statistic induction, we can say that 64 to 71 % of the Slovak population typically buy the basic product (admission ticket to the event) and they arrange the other services ad-hoc. A complex product is preferred only by 29 to 36 % citizens, which is partially related to its insufficient offer. The choice of basic or complex event product is influenced, according to the single-factor dispersion analysis, by education (p-value=0.036, F=2.265), marital status (p-value=0.000, F=6.086), size of settlement (p-value=0.003, F=3.279) and the region, in which Slovak respondents live (p-value=0.012, F=2.598).

While the basic event product is preferred by the biggest part of the Slovak respondents with primary education (78.6 %) and a bachelor's degree (78.3 %), the complex product is relatively more preferred by the individuals with a doctoral degree (36.4 %) and the respondents with complete secondary education (35.1 %).

Higher preference of the basic product can be observed mainly among single respondents (73.4%) and married individuals (65.7 %); divorced respondents are more inclined to buy the complex event product (54.3 %) and preferences of the widowed persons are balanced (50 % of the respondents prefer the basic product and the same rate of them prefer the complex one).

According to the size of settlement the respondents come from, we conclude that the biggest part of the respondents preferring the basic product live in settlements with the population of 2.5 to 5 thousand (80.7 %). On the contrary, the smallest ratio of the respondents preferring the basic product (47.5 %), are permanent residents of the settlements with 100 to 250 thousand inhabitants. We assume that the residents of larger cities are more demanding customers. The basic product is mainly preferred by the respondents from the Banská Bystrica region (75.6 %), and the complex product is mostly preferred by the individuals from the Prešov region (51.1 %).

Expenditure Structure

During their stay in the organized event venue, Slovak respondents spend the largest amount of money on the admission ticket. In the expenditure structure, it is the biggest item for 38.7% of them. A quarter of Slovak respondents spend the largest amount on accommodation services, and less than a fifth expends most resources on buying catering services (Table 4). After using statistic induction, we can conclude with 95 %

Table 4 Commodity or service on which the individuals spend most money during their stay in the event venue

Commodity/ Service	Slovak respondents ratio, in %	Slovak residents ratio, in %	Czech respondents ratio, in %
Admission ticket	38.70	35-42	31.58
Souvenir	4.90	3-6	2.63
CD	0.10	0	0.88
Accommodation services	25.80	23-29	38.60
Catering services	19.10	16-22	20.18
Transport services	10.80	8-13	6.14
Other	0.60	0-1	0.00

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outcomes.

probability that during their stay in the organized event venue, more than a third (35 to 42 %) of the Slovak population spend most money on buying the admission ticket or paying the entrance fee in advance, and approximately a quarter expends most resources on accommodation services (23 to 29 %) and less on catering services (16 to 22 %). As for the Czech respondents, from the aspect of expenditure volume, accommodation services are most significant for 38.6 %. Less than a third (31.6 %) expends most resources on buying an admission ticket, and a fifth (20.2 %) on catering services.

According to the single-factor dispersion analysis, dominant position of the commodity or service in the expenditure structure of the Slovak respondents depends on their education (p -value=0.044, F =2.174) and the size of settlement from which they come from (p -value=0.003, F =3.292).

With regard to their highest completed education level, all age categories spend most money on the admission ticket, or advanced fee payment. The only exception is the individuals with master's degree: the biggest part of those (39.9 %) expends

most resources on accommodation; from this category, only 32% respondents spend the largest amount of money on admission. Relatively highest expenditure on souvenirs is shown by primary school pupils (for 18.6 % a souvenir is an item on which they spend most money), catering services make the top expenditure item for the individuals with secondary education without leaving exams (22.4 %), and transport services for the respondents with an engineer's, master's, or doctoral degree (7.8 %).

The admission ticket makes the biggest item predominantly in the expenditure structure of the individuals from large cities with population of 100 to 250 thousand (52.5 %). The largest part (30.6 %) of the respondents from the towns with 25 to 50 thousand inhabitants, spend most money on accommodation services.

Attendants' Expenditure ceilings

We tried to find out how much the respondents are willing to pay for an admission ticket (in general), or for an entrance fee of a business event. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 The price that the Slovak respondents are willing to pay for attendance at a tourism event

Type of event/ Price of ticket	Ratio of respondents in %, who are willing to pay for an event						
	0 €	10 € max	20 € max	30 € max	40 € max	50 € max	over 50 €
Cultural	1.87	20.95	27.12	20.09	9.61	12.91	7.46
Religious	59.97	22.53	8.90	3.73	1.43	1.72	1.72
Sports	13.20	26.97	26.11	14.20	5.45	8.18	5.88
Business	40.32	24.39	15.49	8.61	3.30	5.16	2.73
Socio-political	61.84	18.79	8.03	5.16	1.87	3.30	1.00
Multi-theme	25.82	30.70	21.66	11.48	3.73	4.45	2.15
Other	32.86	25.68	21.09	9.61	3.16	4.73	2.30
On average, in %	9.90	48.21	27.40	8.75	4.16	1.58	0.00
Slovak citizens ratio, in %	8-12	44-52	24-31	7-11	3-6	1-3	-

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outcomes.

Up to 94.3 % of the Slovak respondents are willing to pay maximum EUR 30 for an event, out of which 9.9 % are not willing to expend any financial resources at all. After generalization, we can conclude with probability of 95 % that 93 to 96 % of the Slovak citizens are willing to pay up to EUR 30 for a ticket or advanced entrance fee; 83 to 88 % are willing to expend maximum EUR 20, and 54 to 62 % are willing to pay maximum EUR 10. We assume that the reasons are partially bad financial situation of the Slovak residents, and the fact that they spend most of their disposable income on provision of their basic needs (shelter and food).

The Czech respondents, in comparison with the Slovak ones, are willing to pay less for admission to the event organized out of their place of residence. Every tenth respondent (11.4 %) expects free entry to the event, 42.1 % are willing to pay up to EUR 10, 4.4 % EUR 20 to 30, and just 3.5 % are willing to pay EUR 30 to 40.

We have tested the existence of correlation between average price level, which the Slovak respondents are willing to pay for an event admission, and their demographic, economic

and geographic characteristics. The correlation ratio (Eta coefficient) has not shown any relation between an average price level and gender (p -value> α). However, it has confirmed weak correlation as for marital status (p -value=0.039, η =0.110), economic activity (p -value=0.000, η =0.212) and the region of which the respondents are permanent residents (p -value=0.002, η =0.180). Spearman's coefficient has shown correlation with neither the respondents' age, nor the size of settlement they come from (p -value> α). However, there is a strong correlation between an average price level of a ticket and the respondents' education (p -value=0.000, correlation coefficient=0.322).

The widowed individuals are willing to pay the lowest price for a ticket. Even 83.3 % of them declared willingness to pay just nothing, or to pay maximum EUR 10. We presume that the reason is especially low income of one-person households. As for the married respondents, similar attitudes were declared by 60.1 %, in the case of the single persons 54.1 %, and in the case of the divorced ones 48.6 %.

Regarding the economic activity of the respondents, pensioners and unemployed persons are willing to pay the least

(80.9 % pensioners and 69.7 % unemployed are willing to pay zero to EUR 10). On the contrary, the self-employed persons are willing to pay relatively most (55.6 % are willing to pay more than EUR 10), as their income mostly depends on their own activity and engagement.

While most of the respondents who are not willing to expend any financial resources on the events come from the Košice (14 %), Žilina (12.6 %) and Nitra (11.9 %) regions, most of the respondents (10.7 %) who are willing to pay EUR 40 to 50 live in the Bratislava region. Free admission to the event, or EUR 20 as the maximum price of a ticket, are preferred by even 95.5 % respondents from the Košice region, 93.6 % respondents from the Prešov region and 89.9 % respondents from the Banská Bystrica region, which can be attributed to high average unemployment rates in the given regions.

The higher the education of the individuals, the more they are willing to pay for the ticket. 13.6 % primary school pupils, 14.3 % persons with primary education, 23.9 % respondents with secondary education without leaving exams, 38.7 % respondents with leaving exams, 53.3 % individuals with bachelor's degree, 57.2 % respondents with engineer's, master's or doctoral degree, and even 72.7 % respondents with complete doctoral studies are willing to spend more than EUR 10 on admission to the event. We assume that disposable income grows along with growing education levels.

For a better idea of the extent of incomes generated by the enterprises, we present the results of the survey done by the Association of the Music Festivals in the Czech Republic [Raabová et al., 2012]. Their results imply that while the attendants of ten examined festivals spent EUR 2.2 mil. on the admission tickets, they spent EUR 2.1 mil. on catering, accommodation, transport and other services utilized in connection with their attendance at the event. As even 60.1 % of the examined festivals attendants were locals, and the surveys (e.g. Coopers and Lybrand, 1989 In Getz, 2012; McHone and Rungeling, 1999; Raabová et al., 2012, p. 26 and others) prove that tourists are

willing to pay more for the events than the locals, we estimate that tourists will spend more on the services related to the event attendance than is the price of admission.

Conclusion

Organized events make an important part of the destinations offer, which can generate participation in tourism or conveniently invigorate a stay in the destination, and thus bring sufficient income to the given territory.

The results of the representative research have shown that tourism events are attended, on annual average, by 88 to 92 % of the Slovak population. With regard to the services the Slovak residents typically use in the events venues, we can conclude that in the destinations which are also the event venues, more than three quarters (77 to 83 %) of the population use catering services. Apart from that, the Slovak residents also use services of accommodation, transport, cultural-social or other enterprises and thus participate in creation of their incomes. The residents of the Czech Republic use all the services in a larger extent.

We have found out that organized events represent an important opportunity not only for development of tourism in the territory, but also for the small and medium-sized enterprises prevailing in the tourism sector. In this respect, it is necessary to encourage better cooperation between organizers of events and providers of tourism services aiming to offer a complex product of an event, which should be differentiated according to a particular event, provenance and needs of the attendants target groups, and their capability and willingness to pay a certain price. The most suitable structure of a product and an optimal price should be determined according to the event attendants' satisfaction and benefit survey. It is also convenient to offer a so-called compound system of a complex event product, which gives an attendant choice of services that can be used during the event.

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