

UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

**THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF PORTUGAL AS A TOURIST
DESTINATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF CZECH TOUR
OPERATORS**

KATEŘINA TOMIGOVÁ

Dissertation for obtaining the Masters Degree in
Tourism Economics and Regional Development

Work made under the supervision of:

Professor Júlio Mendes

Professor Luís Nobre Pereira

2014

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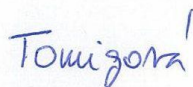
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THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF PORTUGAL AS A TOURIST DESTINATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF CZECH TOUR OPERATORS

Work Authorship Declaration

I declare to be the author of this work, which is unique and unprecedented. Authors and works consulted are properly cited in the text and are in the listing of references included.

Kateřina Tomigová



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ABSTRACT

In the context of tourism, destination attractiveness presents the core of a tourist destination. It has been discussed by tourism researchers that the absence of attractiveness would lead to no tourism. Attractions, as a part of tourism supply, are the main motivational incentive luring thousands of tourists from all over the world to visit a certain area. On the other hand, tourists who create flows between a country of origin and a tourist destination stand for a tourism demand. The destination attractiveness is a key to success for a destination because the attractiveness characteristics create the strengths of a destination and the greater the strengths are the greater number of tourists will visit the place.

The main goal of this dissertation is to explore how Czech tour operators perceive the attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination. All Czech tour operators are the target population of this research because they represent a primary source of information about a tourist destination and can significantly influence the decision of potential tourists about a holiday destination.

One of the important findings of this research is that weak promotion and financial demands are perceived as the main reasons why more Czech tourists do not chose Portugal as their vacation destination. The results show that Portugal is not considered as a key destination for Czech tourists. However, regarding its attractiveness, there exists a very good potential which Portugal as a tourist destination has and which should be utilized in the future.

The dissertation provides significant findings and offers recommendations and conclusions based on the analysis of the data. It proposes insights into understanding the way Portugal as a tourist destination is viewed by Czech tour operators. The study results and conclusions should contribute to enhancement of the relation between Portugal and the Czech market and serve as an inspiration for future research on the present topic.

Keywords: destination; attractiveness; tourists; tour operators; Portugal; the Czech Republic

RESUMO

No atual contexto turístico, a atratividade configura-se como um fator fundamental na escolha de qualquer destino turístico. Os investigadores têm alertado para o facto de, em última instância, a falta de atratividade poder levar à inexistência de qualquer forma de turismo. As atrações de que dispõe determinado destino, como parte integrante da oferta turística, são a principal motivação para que milhares de turistas em todo o mundo queiram visitá-lo. Por outro lado, turistas que geram fluxos monetários entre os seus países de origem e os destinos que visitam, reforçam a procura turística de um país. A questão da atratividade envolve a compreensão de diferentes conceitos, como a competitividade do destino, a sua imagem e “the push and pull theory.” Há que ter em atenção, também, os fatores e características que mais significativamente contribuem para a atratividade, e que se apresentam como pré-requisitos para o desenvolvimento do turismo. A atratividade pode considerar-se a chave do sucesso de um destino turístico, dado que as suas características acabam por criar forças positivas na região, entre as quais se destaca o aumento do número de visitantes.

O principal objetivo desta dissertação é explorar a visão dos operadores turísticos checos relativamente à atratividade de Portugal enquanto destino turístico. Além disso, a pesquisa pretende investigar as seguintes questões: a opinião geral dos operadores checos acerca de Portugal enquanto destino turístico e em relação ao mercado checo; a avaliação que os operadores fazem de características específicas que contribuem para a atratividade geral do país; a posição de Portugal enquanto destino no âmbito da oferta de operadores turísticos; a influência que tem uma anterior visita dos operadores turísticos na perceção da atratividade do país; e as possíveis opções disponíveis no sentido de aumentar o número de turistas checos que visitam Portugal.

A República Checa não se encontra, hoje em dia, entre os principais mercados de origem dos turistas que procuram Portugal. O país enquadra-se nos mercados de diversificação, onde o objetivo é aumentar a quota de mercado e fortalecer a presença de Portugal no mercado checo. No entanto, para países como Portugal que dependem do turismo como sendo uma principais indústrias, a necessidade de atrair um maior número de turistas de todo o mundo é indiscutível. As perspetivas de se conseguir aumentar o número de

visitantes de origem checa em Portugal são bastante boas, dado que este tipo de turistas encontra, nos resorts à beira mar, um conceito de turismo que muito lhe agrada, e que a maioria dos turistas checos nunca visitou o país, aumentando assim a sua atratividade enquanto destino desconhecido.

Os operadores turísticos são a população-alvo da pesquisa, representando a principal fonte de informações sobre um destino turístico e tendo o poder de influenciar significativamente as escolhas de potenciais turistas. Apenas foram selecionados operadores turísticos em cuja oferta de destinos figurava Portugal, com a finalidade de obter dados relevantes e respostas de profissionais que estão familiarizados com o destino em análise. Os dados necessários foram recolhidos com recurso a um questionário enviado via e-mail aos operadores turísticos.

A análise dos dados revela resultados empíricos sobre a perceção dos operadores checos da atratividade de Portugal enquanto destino turístico, e fornece respostas para as principais questões investigadas. Na análise estatística foi utilizando o programa Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, IBM SPSS 21,0.

Uma das conclusões importantes desta pesquisa é o facto de a franca promoção e as procuras financeiras serem tidas como as principais razões pelas quais não há mais turistas checos a escolherem Portugal como destino de férias. Os resultados demonstram que Portugal não é considerado um dos principais destinos para os turistas checos. No entanto, relativamente à sua atratividade, o país possui um forte potencial como destino turístico que deve ser aproveitado no futuro.

A dissertação apresenta a discussão dos resultados mais significativos da investigação e fornece recomendações e conclusões a partir da análise dos dados. Os resultados do estudo, bem como as suas conclusões podem contribuir para a melhoria da relação entre Portugal e mercado checo, servindo ainda de inspiração para futuras pesquisas e estudos sobre o presente tema.

Palavras-chave: destinos; atratividade; turistas; operadores turísticos; Portugal; República Checa

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It is generally known that tourism has become one of the most significant industries playing a key role in economic policies in many countries and representing a major driver for socio-economic progress. In 2013, travel and tourism generated 9.5% of total economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The total contribution from travel and tourism to the world GDP grew by 3.0% which was faster than growth of the world economy and faster than growth of many other industries such as manufacturing, financial and business services or retail. It is expected to show even stronger growth in 2014. The total contribution to employment was 265,855 million jobs in 2013 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014a). Tourism is different from other industries because with the exception of its importance regarding profit generation, it brings other non-monetary benefits as well as costs to destinations. These are comprised of social, environmental and cultural impacts (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008). The aim of this chapter is to introduce the background of the research, state the purpose of the study, to discuss briefly the hypothesis, and to reveal the organization of the dissertation.

1.2 Background of Study

In the literature, there exist different definitions of what a destination is. According to Kotler, Haider and Rein (2003), destinations are places with some form of actual or perceived boundary such as physical boundary of an island or political boundary or market-created boundary. Pike (2008) argues that destination is a geographical space in which a cluster of tourism resources exist rather than a political boundary. Leiper (1995) defined destination as a place towards which people travel and where they choose to stay for a while in order to experience certain features or characteristics – some sort of perceived attraction. According to Cracolici and Nijkamp (2008), a tourist destination is not viewed anymore just as a set of various environmental or cultural resources where people go to spend holiday. It is viewed by many tourists as an overall appealing product, a complex and integrated portfolio of services which are offered in a certain destination, providing an experience which satisfies their needs. The more the destination is able to satisfy tourists' needs the more it is perceived as attractive, and the more it is successful. Buhalis (2000) distinguished different types of tourist destinations: urban destinations; rural destinations; seaside destinations and resorts; alpine destinations; destinations in

authentic (often Third World) countries; and unique-exotic-exclusive destinations. In this research, a primarily seaside destination Portugal and its attractiveness perceived by Czech tour operators is analysed. These two countries were selected for one main reason. The author of the dissertation comes from the Czech Republic and last two years has been studying in Portugal. Personal experience of living in both countries brings the opportunity to investigate in more detail the relationship between these two countries from the tourism point of view, specifically focused on tour operators as the essential link in tourism industry.

Portugal is one of the countries which, in a time of economic crises, can rely on tourism as a source of income. The tourism industry contributes not only to inflow of finance from inbound tourism but also to the creation of new jobs. In 2013, travel and tourism directly supported 101,118 million jobs (3.4% of employment) in the world (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014a). Out of these, 322,000 were supported in Portugal (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014b). It is a sector in which the country has a comparative advantage due to its great natural, historical and cultural riches. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (2014b), in Portugal, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was 15.6% in 2013 and the number is expected to grow by 1.8% in 2014 and by 1.4% in 2024. Portugal is a seaside tourist destination serving tourists especially during summer holidays as a sun and beach spot. Every year, it is visited by millions of tourists. In 2012, foreign visitor spending generated 63.5% of direct travel and tourism GDP when compared with 36.5% for domestic spending (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2013). The number of international tourist arrivals in Portugal was 7,7 million in 2012 (Turismo de Portugal, 2012) and 8,3 million in 2013 which represents 8.3% increase (Turismo de Portugal, 2013). Traditionally, most foreign tourists were coming from the United Kingdom (16.7%), Spain (15.1%), Germany (10.9%), France (10.0%) and Brazil (6.4%) (Turismo de Portugal, 2013). In 2014, country is expected to attract 8,338 million tourists from abroad (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014b).

The initiatives towards the support of sustainable growth of tourism in Portugal are defined in a National Strategic Plan for Tourism (PENT). Within years 2007-2015, Portugal has a strategic vision of luring tourists from 21 countries including the domestic market. The source markets have been divided into three groups, classified based on function of their growth potential and Portugal's competitive positioning. The most

important are so called strategic markets - Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany and France. These countries provide the biggest contribution to income from tourism and main promotional activities should be focused these markets. A second group are markets to be developed – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, the United States of America, Japan, Brazil, the Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium. These markets are also very important for tourism in Portugal and it is necessary to support them even more than the strategic markets. The last group are diversification markets - Austria, Switzerland, Russia, Canada, Poland, Hungary, China and also the Czech Republic. The goal for these countries is to increase market share and foster the awareness of Portugal as an attractive tourist destination (Turismo de Portugal, 2007).

The Czech Republic is located in central Europe, surrounded by Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Austria, with the capital city Prague and about 10,5 million inhabitants. The position in the heart of Europe means that Czech tourists intending to spend their vacation in a seaside destination will travel quite far and consider a variety of possible options, offered usually by tour operators, travel agencies or other tourism agents. This brings an opportunity for foreign seaside destinations which will compete with others in order to attract and gain the tourists. On the Czech market, there has been a growing trend in the interest of Czech tourists for services of tour operators. The increasing interest for services of tour operators has been also confirmed by latest Eurobarometer survey on attitudes of Europeans towards tourism conducted by European Commission stating that the tourism industry is one of a few sectors which, in 2012, despite the crises, recorded growth and generation of new jobs (Association of Tour Operators and Travel Agents of the Czech Republic, 2014). In 2013, Czech tourists went on 11,260 million holidays, out of which 7,076 million were domestic and 4,193 million abroad. The most popular destinations were traditionally Croatia (797,000 tourists), Italy (526,000 tourists), Slovakia (496,000 tourists), Greece (339,000 tourists) and Spain on the 7th place (185,000). The tour operators sold 2,183 million tours in 2013 (Travel Trade Gazette, 2014).

The Czech Republic does not belong to the main market sources for Portugal. The weight of the Czech market presents only about 0.5% of the overall number of visitors. In 2012, the Czech Republic ended on the 15th place in visitation of a destination Portugal behind countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Ireland,

Netherlands, Brazil and others (Eurostat, 2014). However, for countries which rely on tourism as one of the main industries, the need of attracting greater numbers of tourists from all around the world is indisputable. Based on the data from Eurostat (2014), since 2010, there has been notice of an increasing interest of Czech tourists traveling to Portugal. In 2010, the number of arrivals by Czech tourist to a destination Portugal was 22,241 and number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments 89,952. In 2011, 27,968 Czech tourists arrived to Portugal and spent there 117,673 nights. In 2012, the number of arrivals reached 31,844 and the number of spent nights 131,887. As stated in the National Strategic Plan for Tourism, the Czech Republic belongs to countries listed in the diversification markets for Portugal, with an objective to increase a market share and strengthen the awareness of Portugal on the Czech market (Turismo de Portugal, 2007). There is good potential for bringing greater numbers of tourists from the Czech Republic to Portugal as they like to travel to seaside resorts and the majority of Czech tourists have never visited the country, increasing its attractiveness of an unexperienced destination.

1.3 Purpose of Study

Despite the fair amount of studies about the concept of destination attractiveness and the perceptions and interests of tourists, no attention has been given to the perception of tour operators and their efficient work as important tourism industry entities.

The overall goal of the present research is to better understand how Czech tour operators perceive the tourism attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination. In particular, the main questions this research seeks to answer are:

1. What is a general opinion and idea of the tour operators about Portugal as a tourist destination in relation to the Czech market?
2. How do the tour operators evaluate the importance of specific touristic attributes which contribute to the overall attractiveness of the tourism destination Portugal?
3. What is the position of Portugal as a tourist destination within the supply of the tour operators?
4. Does a previous visitation experience of the tour operator workers influence the perceived attractiveness of Portugal?
5. What are possible ways of increasing the number of Czech tourists coming to Portugal?

1.4 Hypothesis to Test

In consideration of the conceptual and empirical perspectives from the related literature discussed in Chapter Two, and the main goal of the present study, two primary research hypothesis were formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *The relative importance of touristic attributes contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination differs by different type of travel experience to Portugal.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The level of importance of each touristic attribute contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination depends on the fact that the respondent has visited Portugal.*

1.5 Organization of Study

The organization of the thesis is comprised of five chapters. Their brief summary is provided below.

Chapter One: Introduction. The first chapter gives an overview of the study including the background of the study, the purpose of the study, hypothesis to be tested, deployed methodology and organization of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review. In this chapter, a review of the available literature related to the attractiveness of a tourist destination is presented. One section focuses on attractions of a tourist destination. The second section discusses the concept of attractiveness in tourism and the attendant attributes, competitiveness, image, push and pull theory and measurement of the destination attractiveness. The third section examines the tour operators, their function and role in the tourism industry. It also gives a brief description of the situation regarding tour operators on the Czech market.

Chapter Three: Methodology. Following the Literature review, this chapter deals with important research issues providing a detailed description of the methodology used in the study. It includes information about population, a sample of the research, structure and development of the questionnaire, and data collection.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and Results. This chapter offers the analysis of data and results of the perception of the attractiveness of Portugal by Czech tour operators and the

research hypothesis introduced in Chapter One. For better understanding, tables and figures are shown in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion. In the last chapter, findings of the research are discussed and conclusions emerging from the data analysis summarized. The researcher gives recommendations for improvement of the investigated issues of the thesis regarding the attractiveness of a tourist destination.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The conceptualization of destination attractiveness is a very complex issue and many factors are involved. The aim of the literature review is to provide a theoretical framework of the attractiveness of a destination, presenting the knowledge about the topic and its development. This review of tourism literature focuses on several aspects related to the attractiveness of a destination. At first, destination attractions are discussed as they represent main elements of destination appeal and the supply and demand are addressed from the tourism point of view. Then, the concept of attractiveness in tourism is defined. Touristic attributes determining the destination attractiveness are examined. Link between destination attractiveness and competitiveness is explored because it is important to understand what role it plays in the destination attractiveness in a process of achieving destination competitiveness. Relation of the destination attractiveness and image is analyzed. Push and pull theory, an early paradigm for understanding tourist motivation, is introduced. Some approaches to measurement of the destination attractiveness are introduced. Finally, the definition of tour operators and their important role as tourism entities is revealed.

2.2 Attractions of Tourist Destination

The tourism phenomenon can be viewed as a system which is an outcome of tourism supply, tourism demand and bridging elements among them (Vanhove, 2011). In tourism literature, supply is represented by all tourism assets that a destination provides for tourists at a certain price in a certain period (Bahar and Kozak, 2008). Kozak and Rimmington (1998) classify five main supply factors: attractiveness of a destination; activities and services; infrastructure; hospitality; and cost. In turn, Goeldner, Ritchie and McIntosh (2000) identified four main components of tourism supply: natural resources and environment; the built environment; transportation; hospitality and cultural resources. Based on a different approach, tourism supply consists of two main elements: attractions of a tourist destination; and facilities of a tourist destination. Natural, cultural, historical and social attractions are a prominent element of supply which have the ability to lure tourists to a destination. From the tourism point of view, this type of supply is called primary as it satisfies primary needs of tourists. Secondary supply stands for means which enable tourists to meet their expectations about their vacation encompassing mainly

facilities in a destination. While attractions bring tourists to a destination, facilities and services provide satisfaction of secondary needs of tourists arising from their stay out of their usual environment. The secondary tourism supply includes for example transport infrastructure, accommodation, cultural, social and sport facilities, restaurant facilities, tourist information centers, tour operators, safety, accessibility and others (Palatková and Zichová, 2011). All the elements/factors of tourism supply such as attractions or various resources can be measured using square meters or kilometers, degrees, rooms and so on. However, it is not possible to increase the attractiveness of a destination by simply increasing the number of attractions or resources in an area. It is necessary to focus on tourists themselves, their perception and evaluation of a destination, and on actors within tourism industry which have influence on tourists during their decision making process (Formica, 2002).

Tourism demand is represented by potential or real tourists who create flows between a country of origin and a tourist destination attracting them. The tourism demand can be defined as “the total number of persons who travel or wish to travel to use tourist facilities away from their places of work and residence” (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 1). There can be distinguished three main kinds of tourism demand (Cooper et al., 2008):

1. Effective/Actual demand – stands for the actual number of participants in tourism, those who really travel to a destination. This type of demand is most common and easily measured.
2. Suppressed demand - represents people who have the intention or desire to travel but at the moment do not for certain reasons such as low purchasing power or problems in supply environment. When changing the circumstances, the demand may change for the effective one.
3. No demand – comprised of people who are not able or do not have the desire to travel.

Based on this division of tourism demand, it can be assumed that there are factors which play a crucial part in tourism demand. The factors are sufficient income, leisure time, and desire to travel. If tourists do not possess one of these properties, it is not possible for tourism demand to exist (Bahar and Kozak, 2008). Talking about demand measures of determining an attractive power of a destination, a majority of empirical studies tend to use one of following measures: the number of visitor arrivals; the number of nights; the stay-length of tourists; the receipts or expenditures; tourist preferences and others. These

demand measures are often used in order to compare the attractiveness of different tourist destinations, based on an approach claiming that the higher number of arrivals or overnight stays or expenditures, the higher attractiveness of a destination. However, none of these measures is fully satisfactory in explaining the attraction power of a destination from the demand perspective. Despite their undoubted significance, there might exist other variables influencing the visitation other than simply the attractiveness of a destination, such as economic, political, or religion issues. Thus, it is essential to examine the attractiveness of a destination focusing on aspects related to the demand (subjective) as well as supply (objective) perspectives (Formica, 2002).

Tourist attractions are an integral part of a region's tourism product. Arguably, they represent the most important part of tourism system (Swarbrooke, 2002). For many destinations it is their attractions which lure thousands of tourists from all over the world. Destination attractions are primary determinants of destination attractiveness and key motivators for visiting a destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000) playing a crucial role in success and development of a tourist destination (Fyall, Garrod and Leask, 2003). Gunn (1988: 37) states that "without developed attractions tourism as we know it could not exist; there would be little need for transportation, facilities, services, and information systems."

According to Swarbrooke (2002), it is rather difficult to find a definition which would encompass all destinations attractions thanks to their complexity and diversity. A broader definition which appears more in accordance with recent development was introduced by Walsh-Heron and Stevens (1990: 2) identifying six basic dimensions:

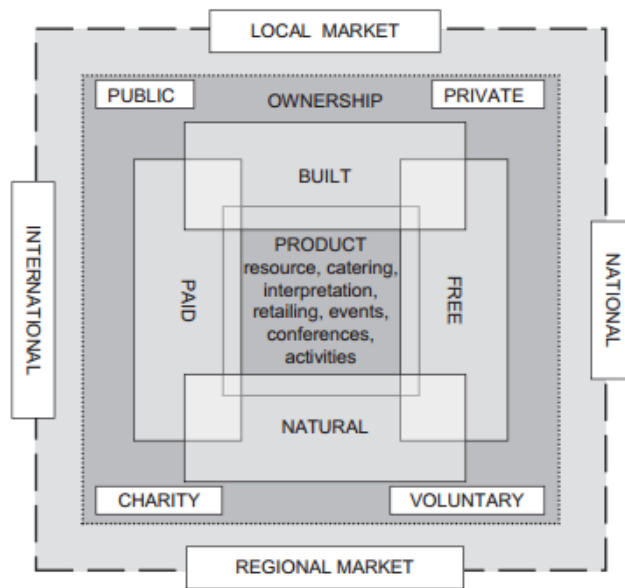
"A visitor attraction is a feature in an area that is a place, venue, or focus of activity and does the following: (1) Sets out to attract visitors/day visitors from resident and tourist populations and is managed accordingly; (2) Provides a fun and pleasurable experience and an enjoyable way for customers to spend their leisure time; (3) Is developed to realize this potential; (4) Is managed as an attraction, providing satisfaction to its customers; (5) Provides an appropriate level of facilities and services to meet and cater to the demands, needs, and interest of its visitors; (6) May or may not charge admission for entry."

According to Pearce (1991: 46), attraction is "a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor and management attention." So far, his study introducing the components of tourist attractions is one the most comprehensive ones,

discussing elements such as public conceptions/understanding, visitor activities, inviolate belt, services zone and price.

Tourist attractions are of a highly diverse nature serving a variety of purposes. For a clear distinction and easier comprehension of the theory of tourism attractions and the tourism system in general, different ways to classify attractions have emerged. One of the first categorizations was provided by Clawson and Knetsch (1966) who developed a sophisticated approach linking the classification of attractions with a spatial criteria based on their proximity to market, level of rareness/uniqueness, and intensity of use. Cooper et al. (2008) classified tourist attractions along several dimensions depending on their ownership, capacity, market or catchment area, permanency and type. Swarbrooke (2002) proposed a typology dividing tourist attractions into four main categories: (1) Features within the natural environment; (2) Human-made buildings, structures and sites which were not originally created as tourist attractions but which great numbers of tourists who use them as leisure amenities; (3) Human-made buildings, structures and sites which were established especially for tourist purposes in order to satisfy their needs, such as theme parks; (4) Special events. These classifications do not seem very exhaustive and sufficient as they do not take into consideration aspects such as ownership, multiple stakeholder involvement, access and others. A more comprehensive model, based on the diversity of attraction product and resources, was established by Leask and is demonstrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Classification of visitor attractions



Source: Fyall, Garrod and Leask (2003)

One of the most recent classifications accepted by many authors based on an ideographic approach was proposed by Ritchie and Crouch (2003) dividing all tourism attractions into seven main categories:

1. Physiography and climate – including natural and climatic features. These elements are very important for the total degree of attractiveness, however, is it hardly possible to manage these elements.
2. Culture and history – including habits and life style of local inhabitants, their language, gastronomy, architectural characteristics and other unique experiences providing satisfaction of tourists' needs to learn something new.
3. Mix of activities – including activities in which tourists can actively take part in and which can be controlled and managed.
4. Special events – including events which the destination organizes in order to become unique and thus lure greater numbers of tourists.
5. Entertainment – including night life, concerts, theater performances and others.
6. Superstructure – including facilities in which the activities provided by a destination are recognized, such as accommodation, entertainment activities and so on.
7. Market ties – referring to personal and professional relations which might exist among a tourist destination and generating markets.

Relationship between tourist attractions and the attractiveness of a destination is positively influenced by destination supporting services. These services and facilities provide a foundation upon which tourism industry is based and are essential for destination success and profitability (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). The supporting services vary and depend on the type of a destination, usually including accommodation, transport, and infrastructure. They play a secondary role in ensuring that a stay of tourists is complete. Without them a majority of tourists would not be willing to visit a destination (Vengesayi, 2008).

2.3 Attractiveness in Tourism

Among the first researchers contributing to the theoretical studies on topic of the destination attractiveness were Gearing, Swart and Var (1974). In their work, they identify several fundamental elements of the destination attractiveness and deal with means of establishing a measure of touristic attractiveness in order to compare touristic destinations. Since then, the concept of destination attractiveness has become a commonly examined topic by many researchers coming from different disciplines and bodies of knowledge.

Mayo and Jarvis (1981: 201) define the destination attractiveness as “the relative importance of individual benefits and the perceived ability of the destination to deliver these individual benefits.” Vengesayi (2008) claims that the ability of a destination to deliver the individual benefits strongly depends on attributes of a tourist destination which facilitate the evaluation of the attractiveness of a destination. Similar definition is given by Hu and Ritchie (1993: 25) stating that the attractiveness of a tourism destination reflects “the feelings, beliefs, and opinions that an individual has about a destination’s perceived ability to provide satisfaction in relation to his or her special vacation needs.” The more a destination is able to satisfy needs of tourists and the more it is perceived as attractive, the better chance for a destination to be chosen. Formica and Uysal (2006) view the destination attractiveness as a relationship between availability of attractions and perceived importance to tourists.

2.3.1 Destination Attractiveness Attributes

Researchers in the tourism field have identified a number of various factors which influence a flow of tourists to different tourist destinations. The factors can be defined as attributes of a destination which attract and motivate tourists to visit a certain place. They are significant determinants of the destination competitiveness and a precondition for tourism development in a certain area (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011). As reported by Hu and Ritchie (1993: 26), “determining the relative importance of each touristic attribute in influencing people’s evaluation of the attractiveness of a tourism destination is the most critical measurement aspect of tourism attractiveness.” Lack of destination attractiveness attributes, which satisfy needs of tourists, would lead to decline of the overall attractiveness and, furthermore, the absence of attractiveness would lead to no tourism as there would be no need for tourism facilities and services (Kim and Lee, 2002).

Var, Beck and Loftus (1977) classify the attributes which contribute to the attractiveness of a destination as natural, social and historical factors, recreation and shopping opportunities, accessibility, and accommodation. Gartner (1989) investigates attribute identification along with a tourism product position, introducing factors such as historic and cultural sites, natural environment, outdoor life, night life, liquor, and receptiveness. Hu and Ritchie (1993), who examined the destination attractiveness based on different types of vacation experiences, suggest that a tourist destination is formed by specific attributes including especially tourist facilities and services. These touristic attributes are: Climate; Availability/quality of accommodations; Sports/recreational opportunities; Scenery; Food; Entertainment; Uniqueness of local people’s life; Historical attractions; Museums/cultural attractions; Communication difficulty due to language barriers; Festivals/special events; Accessibility; Shopping; Attitude toward tourists; Availability/quality of local transportation; and Price levels. According to Laws (1995), there exist primary and secondary properties which form the attractiveness of a tourist destination. Primary destination attributes are constituted by culture, traditional architecture, climate, and ecology. Secondary attributes include elements such as transportation, entertainment, hotels, and catering. Kim (1998) in his study of attractiveness of Korean destinations analyzes six main factors of a tourist destination, namely: seasonal and cultural attractiveness; clean and peaceful environment; quality of accommodations and relaxing facilities; family-oriented amenities and safety; accessibility and reputation; entertainment and recreational opportunities.

There exist several factors which play an important role in affecting the number of tourists coming to a certain destination but which cannot be recognized as destination attractiveness factors. These can be divided into four main groups: (1) Economic factors – foreign exchange rates, cost of living; (2) Political factors – war, terrorism risks; (3) Socio-demographic factors – friendliness of residents, kindness of local public service employees; (4) Risk of natural disasters – earthquakes, tsunami and floods, hurricanes, and so on (Ferrario, 1979).

2.3.2 Destination Attractiveness and Competitiveness

Destination attractiveness research is closely associated with analysis of destination competitiveness. According to Krešić and Prebežac (2011), the attractiveness of a destination is accepted as one of the most important determinants of the destination competitiveness. A destination is said to be competitive if it can attract and satisfy needs of tourists and this competitiveness is determined by various factors which influence tourism service providers as well as particular tourism factors (Enright and Newton, 2004). Success of a destination is influenced by its relative tourist competitiveness in terms of attractiveness characteristics which create strengths of a specific destination (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008). To become successful in tourism market, the level of destination attractiveness must be the same or superior to that of an alternative destination (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) introduced multidimensional strengths of a tourist destination pointing out that not only economic dimension is important but also other dimensions play a significant role when competing on a market, namely social, cultural, political, technological, and environmental. It is important to emphasize that the competitiveness of a destination is not focused on individual aspects of a tourism product but it is viewed as an overall appeal of a tourist destination (Cracolici and Nijkam, 2008).

As new destinations appear and existing ones try to enhance their position in the international market, the approach to destination competitiveness has become an area of great interest examined by many researchers. Numerous definitions and few frameworks have been developed over time to assess the destination competitiveness, even though no clear definition or model has been developed (Dwyer and Kim, 2003). The destination competitiveness can be described as destination evaluation techniques and methods that

can examine and compare various factors and attributes of competing destinations within a planning context (Pearce, 1997). The competitiveness can be also viewed as “the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and/or improve upon them through time” (d’Hauteserre 2000: 23). A competitive destination is a destination comprising of features such as profitable tourism business, an effective market position, an attractive environment, satisfactory visit experiences, and supportive local inhabitants (Pike, 2008).

One of the pioneer scholars dealing with the competitiveness in tourism was Poon (1993) who proposed four key principles that a tourist destination should follow in order to be competitive: (1) Put the environment first; (2) Make tourism a leading sector; (3) Strengthen the distribution channels; (4) Build a dynamic private sector. However, these four principles are very generic and too simple to contribute significantly to deeper understanding of what the competitiveness is. Among the best known and most comprehensive models related to the concept of destination competitiveness belongs the work by Ritchie and Crouch (2003). Having sustainable basis, in their conceptual model of the destination competitiveness they recognize comparative advantages arising from resource endowments and competitive advantages being established as a result of the effective deployment of the endowed resources. They further examine five main categories of attributes as determinant of destination’s competitiveness acting within global macro environment and competitive micro environment. Major pillars of the model are: destination policy, planning and development, destination management, core resources and attractions, and supporting factors and resources. Factors of attractiveness are put in a central position because attractions are the main element of a destination’s appeal and represent a fundamental factor which motivates tourists to visit a destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003).

2.3.3 Destination Attractiveness and Image

The concept of destination attractiveness is interrelated with the study of destination image as “the level of destination attractiveness is largely influenced by the destination image and vice versa” (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011: 498). Mayo and Jarvis (1981) claim that when choosing a destination, travelers consider several alternative options. The subjective judgment they create about a destination depends on different factors among which the image of a destination and its perceived ability to satisfy tourist’s needs is

fundamental. Destination image is the most significant element of a tourist attraction from marketing point of view, having a major impact on cognitive experience of an attraction (Lew, 1987). Customers must perceive a destination as different, unique, and positively positioned when compared to competition. Destinations which have positive, strong and more favorable images are more likely to be purchased. Thus, the tourist destination image is a valuable concept in understanding tourist's perception of an attitude towards a tourist destination, their consequent behavior and final destination choice (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003).

Destination image can be viewed as a set of impressions of a place or individual's overall perception (Govers, Go and Kumar, 2007). Similarly, Buhalis (2000: 101) defines destination image as "the set of expectations and perceptions a prospective traveler has of a destination." As stated by Sirgy and Su (2000), destination image consists of different attributes which are divided into two groups: (1) Controllable attributes including destination product, price, place and promotion, and (2) Uncontrollable attributes including personal characteristics. Destination promotion is significantly important component of destination image formation because the destination image is created based on different promotional and communicational sources during a lifetime of a customer. These include especially opinions and recommendations of family, friends, TV channels, films, books, newspaper and magazines, guides, brochures, and advertisements (Molina and Esteban, 2006). Therefore, the main goal in promoting a tourist destination should be creation of its image in a way which attracts potential tourists to visit the destination (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991).

2.3.4 Push and Pull Theory

Push and pull framework has been a subject for research and academic interest in tourism literature for more than three decades. It provides an approach for understanding and explaining motives related to behavior of tourists (Tam, 2012). Tourism literature often conceptualizes these motives based on two dimensions, push and pull factors or forces. Among first empirical efforts regarding the push and pull theory belongs the work of Crompton (1979) who identified seven socio-psychological motives - the push motives, namely: escape from a perceived mundane environment; exploration and evaluation of self; relaxation; prestige; regression; enhancement of kinship; relationships; and facilitation of social interaction. Ones identified as cultural motives - pull motives,

include novelty and education. Since then, many researchers from different fields have been dealing with the analysis of tourists' motivations in terms of the push and pull factors.

Tourists are involved in various activities because they are “pushed or pulled” by two main factors: their motivations and the destination attributes (Formica, 2000). Push factors can be described as inner desires which push travelers to visit a destination including elements such as need for escape, for adventure, relaxation, prestige, knowledge, social interactions, and so on (Tam, 2012). After deciding to travel, tourists are pulled by factors which influence when, where, and how people travel. These conditions which intensively attract someone to visit a destination are called pull factors (Page and Connell, 2006). For this dissertation dealing with the concept of destination attractiveness, the pull factors are of a greater importance because the destination attractiveness is perceived as a pulling force created by attractions in a particular area in a particular time (Kaur, 1981). It is the major factor which has a pulling effect on tourists during the decision making process regarding the choice of a destination (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011). In his study of images as pull factors of a tourist destination, Prayag (2010) recognized 20 pull factors and measured their importance attributed to the factors in the tourists' choice of a destination. Examples of pull factors are: climate, beaches, water sports opportunities, night life and entertainment, personal safety, accommodation options, local cuisine, quality of services, quality of transport and infrastructure, shopping facilities, scenery and natural attractions, cultural and historical attractions, image of the place, novelty of the destination, and others. Majority of these pull factors are the touristic attributes recognized by Hu and Ritchie (1993).

2.3.5 Measurement of Attractiveness

As believed by Formica (2002), there exist two main approaches of measuring the destination attractiveness: (1) by studying the attractions which are a part of tourism supply; or (2) by focusing on tourists representing tourism demand and examination their perceptions of a destination. Until now, there has not been developed a universal method for measuring tourism destination attractiveness, however, there has been proposed a destination attractiveness framework for measuring destination attractiveness from supply and demand perspective which is widely accepted by authors in tourism literature. It is composed of six steps: 1. Define the region under investigation → 2. Measure the

unit area 3. → Inventory the resources of the region 4. → Group the resources of the region into attraction factors 5. → Evaluate and weigh attractions 6. → Presentation of results in a geographical fashion (Formica, 2002). To measure the destination attractiveness, Hu and Ritchie (1993) use a multi-attribute situational attitude measurement model examining vacation experiences. In their interviews, they focus on three main areas of interest: (1) the relative importance of touristic attributes which contribute to the attractiveness of a tourist destination; (2) the variations in the perceived ability of destinations to satisfy needs of tourists; and (3) the influence of previous visit experience on perceived attractiveness. Kim (1998) employs a multidimensional scaling analysis when studying perceived attractiveness of Korean destinations. He examines attributes of a tourist destination and destinations' perceptual positions with regard to a seasonal preference, with the aim to find ways of increasing tourists' preferences for a destination. Var et al. (1977) focus on touristic areas of British Columbia and analyze tools for creation of an index which would be used for comparing the level of attractiveness among tourist destinations. Krešić and Prebežac (2011) propose a way of calculating the Index of Destination Attractiveness (IDA) values. The IDA is an indicator which can be used to quantify a level of tourism destination attractiveness. This can be done through studying tourists' perceptions of the importance of attractions in a destination and integrating the values into one single unit. After application of the IDA index, it is possible to distinguish attractiveness factors in a specific destination, its attractiveness power as well as compare the destination with others in order to find which destination is perceived as the most attractive one.

2.4. Tour Operators

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2003) defines tour operators as:

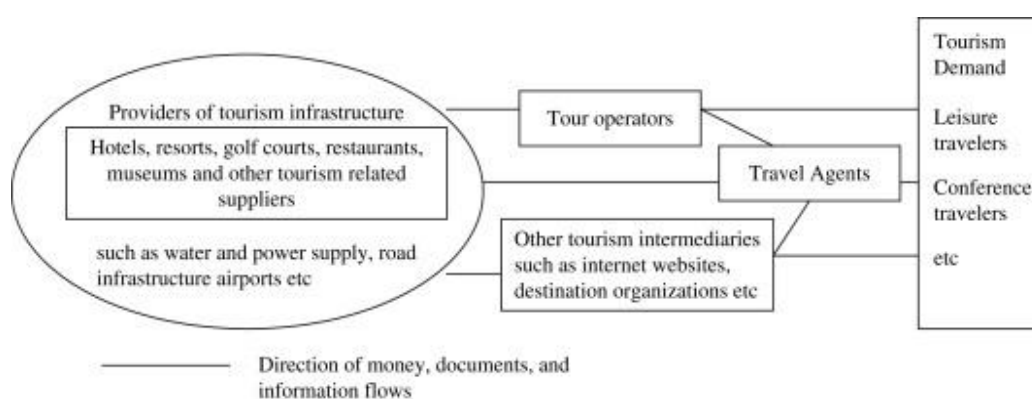
“...businesses that combine two or more travel services (e.g. transportation, accommodation, meals, entertainment, sightseeing) and sell them through travel agencies or directly to final consumers as a single product (called a package tour) for a global price.”

Tour operators work as intermediaries in distribution channel of tourism industry connecting producers and consumers (Gatner and Bachri, 1994). Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1998: 189) state that the main role of intermediaries is:

“...to bring buyers and sellers together, either to create markets where they previously did not exist, or to make existing markets work more efficiently and thereby to expand market size. In all industries the task of intermediaries is to transform goods and services which consumers do not want, to a product that they do want.”

As shown in Figure 2.2., tour operators are an essential entity of a tourism supply chain. A tourism supply chain is a network of organizations which participate in supplying, distributing and marketing of various products and services. The supply chain involves different private and public subjects as well as tourists engaged in tourism services production and consumption (Zhang, Song and Huang, 2009). By linking supply and demand, tour operators play a key role in promoting and distributing products and providing information in the tourism supply chain (Sigala, 2008).

Figure 1.2: Tourism supply chain



Source: Sigala (2008)

Tour operators represent a primary source of information about a tourist destination. They can be very influential and powerful when talking about a decision-making process for a customer. With their attitude, practice, building a good reputation and brand name, tour operators can create an image of a destination in the minds of large numbers of potential clients and might be critical in their choice of a holiday destination (Cavlek, 2002). Furthermore, tour operators' recommendations, understood as important kind of information taken into consideration by tourists during the decision-making process, can significantly influence the success of a particular destination and satisfaction of customers (Klenosky and Gitelson, 1998). There has been hold discussions about the need of tour operators in the present time when most people have an access to the internet. Calveras (2006) points out that the need for intermediation by a tour operator still remains even in

the era of internet especially due to the uncertainty about the quality of services provided by sellers towards customers.

Regarding tour operators in the Czech Republic, the environment in which they presently work has undergone many modifications during last 20 years. Before 1989, there existed only nine tour operators in Czechoslovakia. It was not until the fall of communism when the borders opened, the need of inhabitants to travel grew and the number of tourism subjects strongly increased (Žídek, 2006). According to the data of Mag Consulting (2013), there has been registered 1,501 licensed tour operators in the Czech Republic in 2012, out of which majority focuses on services related to outgoing tourism and tours abroad. As already discussed, the number of Czech tourists using services of tour operators when going for a vacation abroad has been growing during last couple of years. In the Czech Republic, services of tour operators are used by tourists especially for tours to more remote and exotic destinations. To the most popular destinations such as Croatia, Slovakia or Italy, about two thirds of Czech tourists travel individually and one third with a tour operator (Association of Tour Operators and Travel Agents of the Czech Republic, 2014). However, a country such as Portugal is perceived by Czech tourists rather as an exotic destination and so it was a natural decision to turn the attention to tour operators in this research.

Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

An overview of this work defining the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the hypothesis, and the organization of the work were introduced in Chapter One. Chapter Two, the literature review, dealt with the theoretical concept of destination attractiveness and attractions. The goal of this chapter is to describe the research methodology discussing the empirical construct which includes quantitative data explaining the theory. Descriptive studies are primarily aimed at finding out “what is,” thus, observational and survey methods are often used to collect the descriptive data (Borg and Gall, 1989). Descriptive research can be either quantitative or qualitative. A quantitative approach widely used by many researchers in tourism (Riley, 1996) is deployed in this study in order to measure the concept of destination attractiveness.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this research includes all Czech tour operators. Since the major goal of this dissertation is find out how Czech tour operators perceive the attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination on the Czech market, after searching on Google, it was decided to observe the study population of Czech tour operators which must include tours to Portugal. The study population included 37 tour operators. These tour operators were contacted via email to fill out a questionnaire available in Google Documents. There were no restrictions as for the tour operator size, location, or position of the worker in the tour operator. The only requirement for the tour operator was to have the tourist destination of Portugal in the offer in order to get relevant data and answers from workers which are familiar and informed about the examined destination. The final sample included 26 tour operators. Despite being a small sample, it represented 70.3% of the study population.

3.3 Questionnaire

The web-based questionnaire was developed specifically for this research, but also based on prior studies. It was originally written in the English language and after that translated into Czech language in order to eliminate the possible language barriers which workers of the tour operators could have. The answers were later translated back into English. The questionnaire in English is in Appendix A.

The questionnaire is comprised of four sections: (1) respondents' general opinion/idea about Portugal as a tourist destination; (2) respondents' evaluation of 17 attributes which contribute to the attractiveness of a tourist destination; (3) examination of the position of Portugal as a tourist destination within the supply of Czech tour operators; and (4) socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Section one aims to explore a general opinion/idea of tour operator workers about Portugal as a tourist destination in relation to the Czech market. This section comprises questions such as what comes to your mind when you think about Portugal as a tourist destination or what are the main reasons why more Czech tourists do not travel to Portugal.

Section two uses the conceptual framework for measuring destination attractiveness suggested by Hu and Ritchie (1993). A set of 17 attributes are evaluated in order to measure the attractiveness of Portugal as a tour destination from the perspective of Czech tour operators. Respondents should indicate the level of importance of each touristic attribute on a 5-point Likert scale, where: 1 = not important at all, 2 = slightly important, 3 = neither important nor unimportant, 4 = moderately important and 5 = very important. The particular attributes are: Climate; Availability/quality of accommodations; Sports/recreational opportunities; Scenery; Food; Entertainment activities; Uniqueness of local people's life; Historical attractions; Cultural attractions; Communication difficulties; Festivals/special events; Accessibility; Shopping; Attitude toward tourists; Availability/quality of local transportation; Price levels; and Safety and security. The last attribute safety and security was added to the original 16 attributes because it has become an emerging issue in today's international tourism. Prayag (2010) refers safety as an attribute which is universally important for all tourist destinations. Cavlek (2002) adds that peace, safety, and security are primary requirements for growth, attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations. Without safety destinations cannot successfully compete on the generating markets as potential tourists do not want to visit a place that they perceive as unsafe.

Section three tries to find out what the position of Portugal is as a tourist destination in the offer of the tour operators. Several questions are aimed at tours to Portugal and important figures such as how many tourists on an average travel with the tour operator every year to Portugal and so on. Options which Czech tourists have when they decide to travel to Portugal are discussed. Characteristics of a standard trip offered to Portugal are observed.

Section four includes specific questions focusing on the socio-demographic characteristics such as age of the tour operator workers, his/her position within the tour operator, past visitation of Portugal and questions regarding the tour operator itself, such as the year of creation, size, number of serviced clients and others.

3.4 Data Collection

For the purpose of the study the data collection was carried out in one phase in February and March 2014, using an electronic survey. A web-based questionnaire was conducted via a specialized platform created in Google Documents. Afterwards, a link leading to the questionnaire was sent via email to tour operators in the Czech Republic. The reason for using this type of questionnaire was its flexibility and easy accessibility. The tour operators situated in the Czech Republic were able to answer from any location and any time. Further, the web-based questionnaire is inexpensive and attractive for respondents. For example, respondents can view definitions of words or instructions for answering questions by clicking on linked terms. Another advantage of this type of questionnaire is that the data are automatically transformed into an analysable format which can be copied afterwards into analytics software such as the IBM SPSS and also the web-based questionnaire provides participants with a degree of anonymity (Davis, 1999).

Survey participants were chosen based on their web offer which must have included tours to Portugal. As said before, 37 tour operators were found and approached during the last three weeks of February and the first week of March 2014. In order to get a higher response rate, two call backs to the tour operators asking them personally to fill out the web-based questionnaire were run. The first call including 12 tour operators was made in the middle of February. The second call was performed during the first week of March addressing eight tour operators. Ultimately, a total of 26 questionnaires were collected and analysed for the study.

Chapter 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of research presents the analysis and principal results of the attractiveness of Portugal and the research hypothesis introduced in Chapter One. All the data were coded into a suitable form and afterwards statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, IBM SPSS 21.0. A number of statistical procedures were used to analyze the data. Descriptive data analysis were applied to socio-demographic variables. Regarding touristic variables of section two, differences between groups defined by socio-demographic variables were evaluated by using the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test and by the Spearman correlation coefficient. Furthermore, relationships among other variables were examined by using the Pearson's Chi-square test.

In this chapter, results of the survey data analysis are presented and discussed. A profile of the sample is introduced. The characteristics of the tour operator's tours and the offer to Portugal are examined. A general opinion of tour operators about Portugal as a tourist destination is investigated. An important part deals with touristic attributes which contribute the overall attractiveness of a destination and their evaluation by workers of the tour operators. Then, the evaluation of hypothesis which were proposed in the study is revealed. Finally, other relationships between selected interest variables are discussed.

4.2 Empirical Results

4.2.1 Sample Description

In total 26 tour operators from the Czech Republic took part in the survey. All of the 26 tour operators are specialized in outgoing tourism, out of which 15 are specialized in domestic tourism also and seven in incoming tourism. A summary of the characteristics of the sampled tour operators is provided in Table 4.1. The largest number of the tour operators (61.5%) were created between years 1990 and 1995, shortly after the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia which led to the fall of communist regime, opening of borders and a complete change in travel and tourism for Czech citizens. About one fifth

(19.3%) of the tour operators were created from 1996 to 2000. Only one tour operator was created before 1989 and two tour operators after 2010. Talking about the size of the sampled tour operators, over slightly half (57.7%) had from 6 to 50 employees which falls into the category of a medium size followed by small sized tour operators (30.8%) with no more than 5 employees. As for the annual number of serviced clients, 42.3% of the tour operators send from 5,001 to 50,000 clients for holiday every year. The possibility of not answering this question was chosen by 26.9% especially for two reasons: some of them did not wish to report the data and the rest did not know the rough estimates.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of tour operators

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Year of creation of TO		
Before 1989	1	3.8
1990 – 1995	16	61.5
1996 – 2000	5	19.3
2001 – 2009	2	7.7
After 2010	2	7.7
Size of tour operator		
Small (≤ 5 employees)	8	30.8
Medium (6 to 50 employees)	15	57.7
Large (≥ 51 employees)	3	11.5
Annual number of serviced clients		
Do not wish to answer	7	26.9
≤ 1000	3	11.5
1001 - 5000	2	7.7
5001 - 50 000	11	42.3
$\geq 50\ 001$	3	11.5

The demographic profile of the workers of the tour operators is presented in Table 4.2. As can be observed, 38.5% of respondents were between 35 and 44 years of age followed by 30.8% who were between the ages of 25 and 34 years. Only one was younger than 24 years of age and two were older than 55 years of age. In terms of past visits, 11 (42.3%) workers of the tour operators have visited Portugal before and 15 (57.7%) have not been to Portugal. The majority of the respondents work in the positions of sale officer (26.9%), product manager (23.1%), and delegate or tour guide (15.4%).

Table 4.2: Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
≤ 24	1	3.8
25 – 34	8	30.8
35 – 44	10	38.5
45 – 54	5	19.2
≥ 55	2	7.7
Visited Portugal		
Yes	11	42.3
No	15	57.7
Position in tour operator		
Product manager	6	23.1
Delegate/Tour guide	4	15.4
Administrative worker	3	11.5
Sales officer	7	26.9
Travel consultant	2	7.7
Other	4	15.4

4.2.2 Characteristics of Tour Operator's Offer and Tours

The average number of Czech tourists who travel to Portugal every year is around 2.3% in relation to all realized tours of the sampled tour operators. The number ranges from a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 15%. The characteristics of the Czech tour operator's offer to Portugal is summarized in Table 4.3. In most cases, Portugal as a tourist destination was added to the offer over ten years, 42.3% between years 2000 and 2004 and 30.8% from 2005-2010. For two of the sampled tour operators Portugal is relatively a new destination, being a possible destination for holiday since 2010. The number of tours to Portugal which a single tour operator offers every year ranges mostly from 10 to 50 tours (42.3%). Less or equal 10 tours per year are offered by 30.8% tour operators. Only three tour operators (11.5%) offer more than 101 tours to Portugal. As for the promotion of tours to Portugal, almost 70% of the tour operators do not take any further steps in strengthening the position of Portugal as a tourist destination in their offer. The rest of the tour operators which promote the tours concentrate especially on web promotion and creation of Facebook profiles with photos and videos from Portugal and adding news about Portugal as a possible destination for holiday. Some of the tour operators provide thematically oriented brochures and catalogs focused solely on Portugal, its history, beauties of nature and cultural landscape, such as Porto's vineyards,

the Royal Palace of Sintra or the Flower Festival taking place in Madeira. One tour operator promotes Portugal as a golf paradise and tries to attract new customers at trades of tourism.

Table 4.3: The offer to Portugal

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Tours to Portugal added to offer		
Before 2000	5	19.2
2000-2004	11	42.3
2005-2010	8	30.8
After 2010	2	7.7
Number of tours offered		
≤10	8	30.8
11-50	11	42.3
51 – 100	4	15.4
≥101	3	11.5
Promotion of tours		
Yes	6	23.1
No	20	76.9

The characteristics of a standard tour offered to Portugal are underlined in Table 4.4. Almost 77% of tours to Portugal offered to Czech tourists are excursion tours. The offer of package tours represents only about 23% of tours. This means that the majority of Czech tourists who decide to visit Portugal do not come for only recreation and the “sun and beach” experience. They arrive rather with educational intentions and interests for sightseeing. The typical sun and beach destinations for Czech tourists that remain are Croatia and Italy. Portugal can be seen as a country where Czech tourists look for an overall knowledge of the country including mainly the historical and cultural areas of interest. The most used transportation to Portugal is the air connection (85%). This fact is not surprising when taking into consideration the distance of about 2,000 kilometers between the Czech Republic and Portugal. Some tourists also use the possibility of combination of air and bus connection (15%) usually for trips to Portugal and Spain together. None of the sampled tour operators includes the option of entirely bus connection or own connection. In general, a standard tour to Portugal lasts from 6 to 9 days (76.9%). The rest comprises of tours for 10 - 12 days (11.5%), more than 13 days (7.7%) and less than 5 days (3.8%). It can be concluded that in almost 80% of cases, Czech tourists who visit Portugal spend about one week in the destination. There is only

a small proportion of those who stay a longer or a shorter period of time. Accommodation in hotel (80.8%) is the most common type of accommodation facility offered to Czech tourists. Only 15.4% from the offer of tours to Portugal present apartments and 3.8% different type of accommodation. One of the tour operators marked villa as standard accommodation. This result might be one of the main explanations why tours to Portugal are expensive for Czech clients. Tourists have mostly the option of choosing from luxury hotels and the offer of cheaper accommodation is missing. As for meals, half-board (88.5%) is the most common type of meals offered. Self-catering (7.7%) and all-inclusive (3.8%) are not significantly represented in the offer. None of the sampled tour operators offers full-board meals. Regarding the price of a standard trip, 42.3% of the offered tours cost between 601 to 800 Euros per person. Tours which cost about 801-1000 Euros present 38.5% of the offer. Cheaper or more expensive tours are not very common for a holiday in Portugal.

Table 4.4: Characteristics of a standard tour to Portugal

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Type of tour		
Package tour	6	23.1
Excursion tour	20	76.9
Transportation		
Airplane	22	84.6
Airplane + Bus	4	15.4
Length of stay		
≤ 5 days	1	3.8
6 – 9 days	20	76.9
10 – 12 days	3	11.5
≥ 13 days	2	7.7
Accommodation		
Hotel	21	80.8
Apartment	4	15.4
Other	1	3.8
Meals		
All-inclusive	1	3.8
Half-board	23	88.5
Self-catering	2	7.7
Price per person		
401 – 600 Euros	3	11.5
601 – 800 Euros	11	42.3
801 – 1000 Euros	10	38.5
≥ 1001 Euros	2	7.7

There are several parts of Portugal which can be visited with the Czech tour operators, some of them specially oriented. Their overview is provided in Table 4.5. Portugal's capital city Lisbon has the highest representation as 88.5% of the sampled tour operators offer trips to Lisbon. In the second place there is a Portuguese island Madeira where 76.9% of tour operators enable their clients to travel. The most southern region Algarve is in the offer of 57.7% sampled tour operators. Half of the tour operators offer a tour to Portugal and Spain together, usually providing transportation by airplane one way and by bus second way. A tour through Portugal which, besides big cities like Lisbon and Porto, explores other places such as Cabo da Roca, Cascais, Alentejo, Fatima and Coimbra, can be taken with 46.2% tour operators. Table 4.5 also shows that 34.6% of tour operators provide trips to Porto. The least common in the offer is the Azores as only 15.4% of tour operators organize trips to these islands.

In the last few years, so-called "euroweekends" have become very popular with Czech tourists. This trend is reflected in the offer of Czech tour operators as 34.6% of them offer weekend tours to Portugal. All of the euroweekends are organized to Lisbon which is one of the main reasons why Lisbon is in first place in the offer of tours to Portugal. Clients can choose one of the sport-oriented tours from the offer of 26.9% tour operators. These include especially two kinds of sports: surf and golf. This offer reflects the growing interest of Czech tourists for these sports for which there are no or little conditions in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic as a landlocked country in the middle of Europe has no access to the sea or ocean. According to the study of KPMG (2012), Spain and Portugal are the two favorite and most sought-after destinations by Czech tourists for these sports and about 60% of Czech tour operators recorded growth in the number of golf oriented tours in 2011. To sum up, sport-oriented tours are a promising area for attracting more Czech tourists to visit Portugal in the future. Furthermore, 15.4% of the tour operators provide special tours to Portugal for seniors and 34.6% of tour operators do not offer any of these special tours.

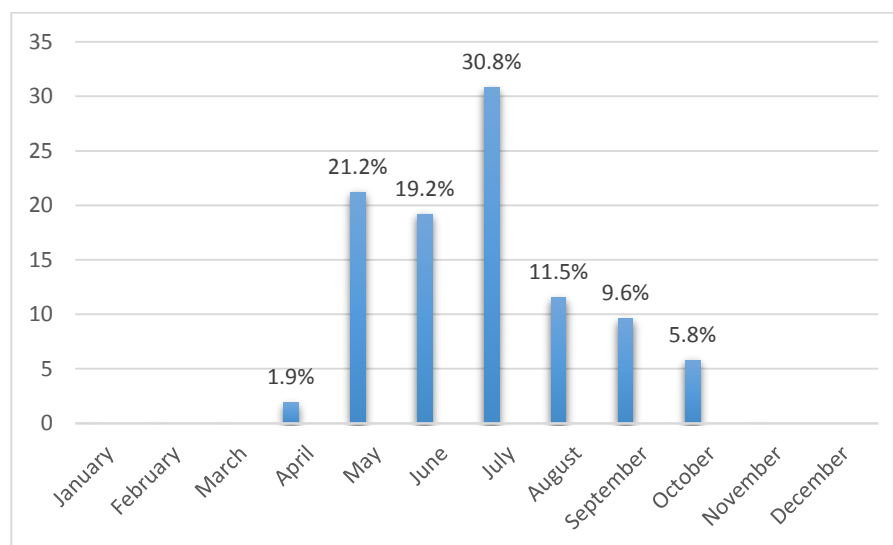
Table 4.5: Parts of Portugal/Special tours

Variable	Percent of responses	Percent of cases
Parts of Portugal which can be visited		
Algarve	15.6	57.7
Lisbon	24.0	88.5
Porto	9.4	34.6
Madeira	20.8	76.9
Azores	4.2	15.4
Tour through Portugal	12.5	46.2
Portugal +Spain	13.5	50.0
Special tours to Portugal		
Weekend tours	31.0	34.6
Sport-oriented tours	24.1	26.9
Senior tours	13.8	15.4
None	31.0	34.6

Note: The percentage of cases does not sum up 100% because a particular TO may supply more than one special tour.

The period of time during which Czech tourists travel the most with the sampled tour operators to Portugal is demonstrated in Figure 4.1. A majority of tours take place during spring or summer. This fact was assumed beforehand because Portugal is generally perceived as a seaside holiday resort. Indeed, 30.8% of Czech tourists visit Portugal during the month of July. It is interesting that in second place, Czech tourists arrive the most to Portugal in May. This result corresponds with the high offer of tours to Madeira and it can be concluded that Czech tourists are interested particularly in the flower festival which takes place in Madeira each year during May. Almost one fifth (19.2%) of Czech tourists visit Portugal during June. In addition, 11.5% of Czech tourists visit Portugal in August followed by 9.6% in September and 5.8% in October. Only a small proportion of the visits (1.9%) takes place in April and during other months including January, February, March, November and December, Portugal is not sought after by Czech tourists at all.

Figure 4.1: Months of most frequent visits



4.2.3 Perception of Portugal by Tour Operators

This part of the chapter aims to analyze a general opinion and idea which Czech tour operator workers have about Portugal as a tourist destination in relation to the Czech market. At first, respondents expressed their associations of ideas about Portugal. The answers are shown in Figure 4.2. The most, Portugal is connected with the image of ocean or sea. These words were mentioned 12 times which means that almost half of respondents thought of ocean or sea. The second most frequent answer was wine or Port wine stated nine times. Beach was on the third place appearing 8 times followed by sun named by seven tour operator workers. The association with the capital city Lisbon had six respondents and four imagined football. Three times were mentioned the thoughts of wind, Porto and surf. Words used two times included beautiful nature, nice/friendly people, sights, golf, holiday, sand and Algarve. Different ideas mentioned once were history, wild Atlantic coast, azulejos, cliffs, friends, good mood, seafaring, palms and Sintra. From the figure it is evident that in most cases, respondents associated Portugal with objects which cannot be found in the Czech Republic and which they seek for their holidays such as the ocean, beach, or sun related to warm weather.

Figure 4.2: Associations with Portugal

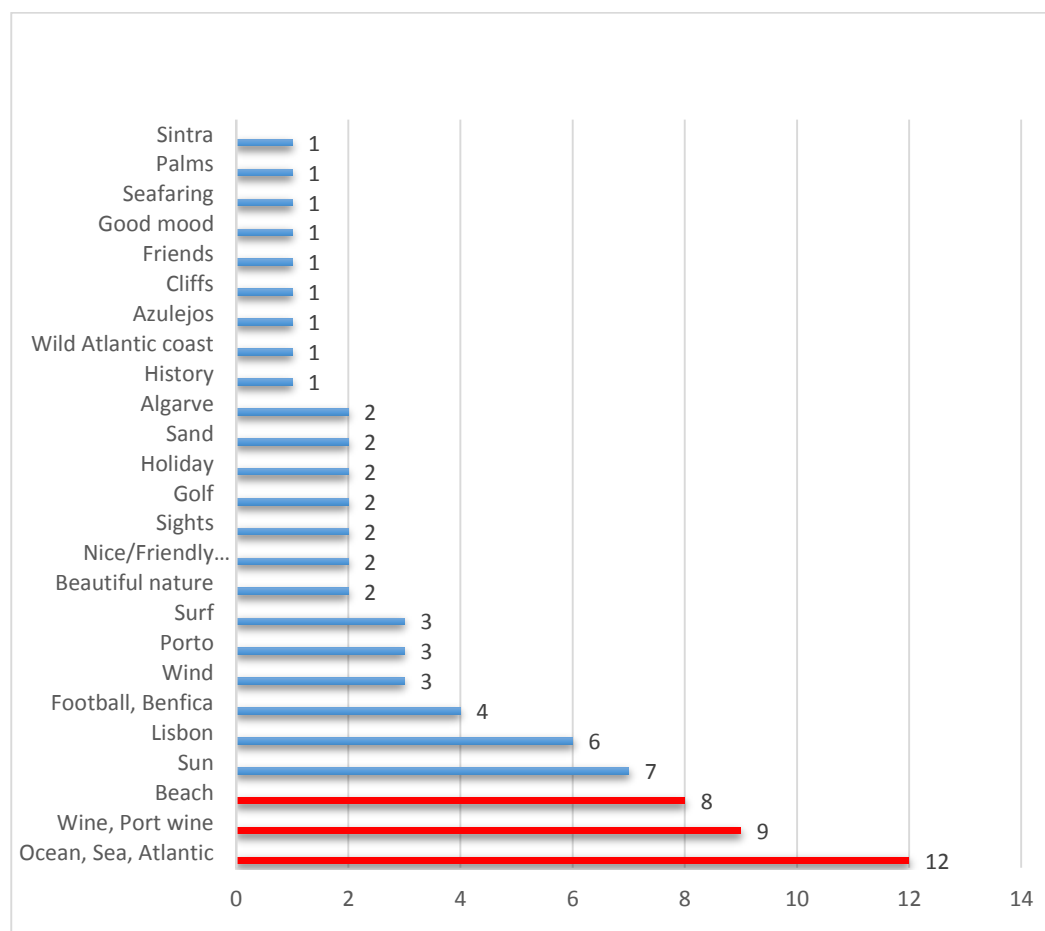


Table 4.6 reveals results of other investigated issues related to the perception of Portugal by Czech tour operators, namely the perceived potential of Portugal, influence of economic situation, and level of promotion. As can be seen from that table, 84.6% of respondents think that Portugal has potential to be visited by a greater number of Czech tourists than it is currently and only 15.4% answered the opposite. Talking about the economic situation of Portugal, on the one hand 69.2% of respondents do not find the economic situation to be a significant factor influencing the numbers of Czech tourists coming to Portugal. On the other hand, 30.8% of the tour operator workers believe that the economic situation plays a role in the decision-making process of Czech tourists considering Portugal as their holiday destination. It has been agreed by 69.2% of respondents that the promotion of Portugal as a tourist destination in the Czech market is poor. It was the lowest possible rating. About one fifth (19.2%) of the sampled tour operators think that the promotion is fair and only 11.5% find the level good. Out of the 26 tour operators, no one finds the level of promotion excellent or very good. As discussed

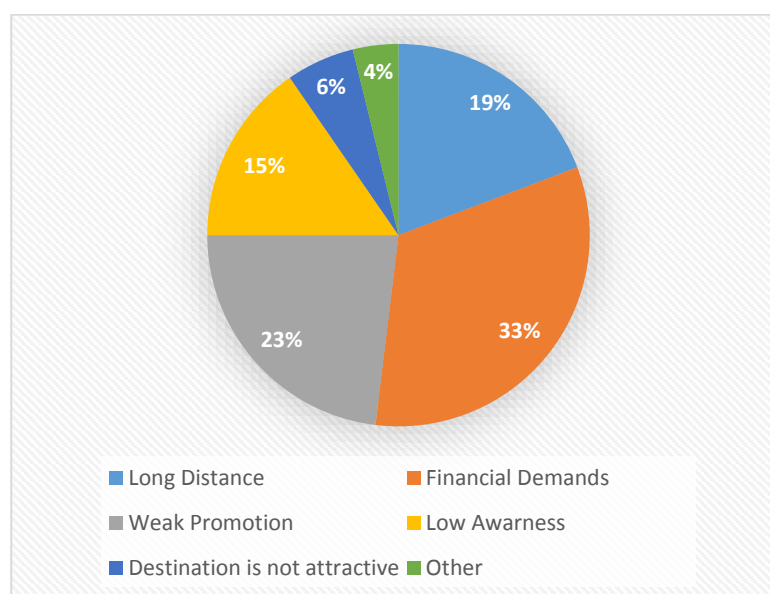
in the literature review, the promotion of a destination plays a key role in destination image formation which affects the decision of tourists to travel to a particular place. It is influenced by a whole range of factors such as the information gained from tour operators.

Table 4.6: Potential of Portugal/Influence of economic situation/Level of promotion

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Portugal has potential to be visited by greater number of Czech tourists		
Yes	22	84.6
No	4	15.4
Economic situation has influence on inflow of Czech tourists		
Yes	8	30.8
No	18	69.2
Evaluation of promotion of Portugal on Czech market		
Good	3	11.5
Fair	5	19.2
Poor	18	69.2

Analyzing reasons why Czech tourists do not come to Portugal in greater numbers is an important object of the research. Figure 4.3 presents main reasons which workers of the tour operators find essential when considering the causes of low inflows of tourists from Czech. Based on the data it is evident that financial demands (33%) and weak promotion of Portugal (23%) are the two principal problems in the relation of Czech tourists to the tourist destination Portugal. These reasons present together more than 50% of answers. Other quite significant reasons are long distance (19%) and low awareness of Portugal as a tourist destination (15%). Only 6% of respondents think that Portugal as a destination is not attractive for a Czech tourist. As other reasons (4%) were mentioned high prices of air tickets and cold ocean.

Figure 4.3: Main reasons why tourists do not travel to Portugal



In addition to examining causes of why more Czechs tourists do not travel to Portugal, it is also necessary to think about steps which should be realized in order to improve the situation. The respondents were asked to suggest two ways of attracting more tourists from the Czech Republic for visitation to Portugal. All the answers can be basically divided into four main areas dealing with issues of (1) promotion; (2) price; (3) accessibility; and (4) specialized tours. *The first area* focuses on ways of attracting more tourists through better promotion. In his work, Crouch (1995) claims that there exists a positive relationship between promotion and demand in international travel and tourism. Only effective promotion as a part of marketing mix can attract and lure tourist flows to visit a destination (Mulec, 2010). The fact that most ideas suggested by tour operators were related to better promotion is in accordance with data from a previous question. Weak promotion of Portugal on the Czech market was found as the second most significant reasons why more Czech tourists do not visit Portugal, evaluated as poor in a majority of cases. In more detail, respondents talked about a better promotion of the destination as a whole, its outstanding sights and sport activities. As means of better promotion and increase of knowledge and interest of potential clients, more advertisements should be applied. These include TV and Radio commercials with footages of Portuguese beauties of nature; brochures and catalogues focused specifically on Portugal as a tourist destination with photos of its sights and landscape; lectures and travelogues with projections organized by people who visited the country; and

presentation of the country on fair trades in tourism in the Czech Republic. Three tour operators agreed that there should be stronger focus on Madeira and its festivals during the year, especially the flower festival in May. On the other side, Portuguese authorities responsible for promotion of their country should enhance ways of bringing more Czech tourists such as a better marketing campaign luring the tourists for some gastronomical festival and others. *The second area* comprises of price issues which 41.6% of respondents addressed in their answers. Financial demands were determined in this study as the primary reason why Portugal does not belong in destinations popular with Czech tourists. It was also found out that the price of a standard tour to Portugal ranges in most cases (43%) from 601 to 800 Euros per person. However, based on the research by Cetelem (2013), one third of Czech tourists are willing to spend a maximum of 400 Euros per person for holiday abroad and only every eighth tourist is willing to spend more than 890 Euros. Therefore, it is logical that the lower prices of tours to Portugal and air tickets were mentioned by respondents as solutions of bringing more Czech tourists to Portugal. There should be discount vouchers offered for trips to Portugal and a greater amount of first and last minutes discounts. Two respondents mentioned that the offer should include cheaper types of accommodation other than expensive hotels such as camps with self-catering in order to make the tours more affordable for Czech customers. *The third area* of responses were related to accessibility of the destination. Page (2005) points out that transportation, as an essential part of tourism, connects tourists with various attractions and the better the transportation system the greater the tourism expansion. In this study, six respondents suggested that there is a need for better air connections between the Czech Republic and Portugal. Only tourists who travel with a tour operator to Portugal are guaranteed a direct connection to various cities of Portugal. Those who decide to travel on their own have only one option of a direct flight, from Prague to Lisbon. There are no other direct connections from other cities than the capital Prague to Portuguese cities such as Porto or Faro. The respondents assume that a better selection of flights would increase the number of Czech tourists in Portugal. *The fourth area* concerns ideas about the tours and their specialization or characteristics. Respondents suggested to include more sport-oriented tours in the offer, such as golf tours, bicycle tours, or surf-oriented tours especially for a young target group. Based on the research, 27% of sampled tour operators offer sport oriented tours. Except for special packages for young travelers, more culture-oriented packages should be created for a higher age group attracting them for Portuguese

cuisine and wine areas of Porto. One respondent proposed more stays for 10/11 nights. Tours for 10 – 12 days represent only 11.5% in the offered of the sampled tour operators.

4.2.4 Touristic Attributes and Their Importance

This section of the chapter inquires the question of the respondents' evaluation of the relative importance of particular touristic attributes which contribute to the overall attractiveness of a tourism destination, in this research regarding the destination Portugal. Based on the study of Hu and Ritchie (1993) and with certain modifications, 17 attributes were evaluated by workers of the tour operators from the least to the most important. Table 4.7 reveals the overview of attributes and results.

Table 4.7: The relative importance of each touristic attribute contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination Portugal in terms of visitors and non-visitors

Attribute	Visitors (n=11)		Non-visitors (n=15)		Sig.btw. Groups
	Average Rating	Ranking	Average Rating	Ranking	
Scenery	4,727	1	4,133	3	0.068
Accessibility	4,545	3	3,867	6	0.094
Festivals/Special Events	4,182	6	3,133	13	0.026
Food	4,091	7	3,467	9	0.124
Sports/Recreational Opportunities	4,000	8	3,200	12	0.091
Cultural Attractions	3,818	9	3,333	10	0.261
Uniqueness of Local Peoples Life	3,636	10	3,267	11	0.338
Shopping	2,727	15	2,667	17	0.865
Climate	4,364	4	4,600	1	0.654
Safety and Security	3,455	12	4,000	4	0.198
Availability/Quality of Accommodations	3,545	11	3,667	7	0.804
Attitude Toward Tourists	3,273	13	3,533	8	0.511
Availability/Quality of Local Transportation	2,636	16	3,000	15	0.390
Communication Difficulties	2,182	17	2,933	16	0.059
Entertainment Activities	3,182	14	3,067	14	0.766
Historical Attractions	4,636	2	4,267	2	0.459
PriceLevels	4,273	5	3,933	5	0.429

Visitors. The results show that scenery, historical attractions, accessibility, and climate were rated by those who have previously visited Portugal as the four most important attributes contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination Portugal.

Communication difficulties, availability and quality of local transportation, shopping, and entertainment activities were evaluated as four least important attributes in influencing respondents' perception of attractiveness of the tourist destination Portugal.

Non-visitors. In case of respondents who have not previously visited Portugal, the highest average rating was given to climate, followed by historical attractions, scenery, and safety and security. The four least important touristic attributes were shopping, communication difficulties, availability and quality of local transportation, and entertainment activities.

4.3 Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis 1 states that the relative importance of touristic attributes contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination differs by different type of travel experience to Portugal.

This hypothesis is stated at an overall or aggregate level which means that it is evaluated based on the rankings of the attributes. Thus, a Spearman Correlation was calculated based on the overall rankings assigned to each of the 17 attributes by the visitors and non-visitors. The estimated Spearman rank correlation coefficient was 0.75 and it was statistically significant ($p=0.001$). There was a strong and positive correlation. We can conclude that the ranks are similar in both groups, visitors and non-visitors. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected at the 0.05 significance level. There are no significant differences in the ranking of the relative importance of the touristic attributes in terms of different type of travel experience. This means that the same attributes tend to be classified in approximately the same rank by visitors and non-visitors.

Hypothesis 2 states that the level of importance of each attribute contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination depends on the fact that the respondent has visited Portugal.

To compare the importance rating of each touristic attribute contributing to the attractiveness of a destination for both groups, visitors and non-visitors, the Mann-Whitney test was used. At the 0.1 level of significance, the analysis found out that for 12 touristic attributes there were no significant differences in importance between the two different types of travel experience. These include: Shopping; Climate; Availability/Quality of Accommodations; Food; Entertainment Activities; Uniqueness of

Local Peoples Life; Historical Attractions; Cultural Attractions; Attitude toward Tourists; Availability Quality of Local Transportation; Price Levels; Safety and Security. For five touristic attributes, such differences exist. These include: Sports/Recreational Opportunities; Scenery; Communication Difficulties; Festivals/Special Events; Accessibility. For instance, whereas “scenery” and “festivals/special events” were rated 4.73 and 4.18 in the case of visitors, their relative importance in contributing to the attractiveness of a tourism destination Portugal for non-visitors were rated 4.13 and 3.13, respectively. In a similar way, “communication difficulties” was rated 2.18 in the case of visitors, its relative importance in contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination Portugal for non-visitors was rated 2.9. In more specific terms, only five of the 17 touristic attributes chosen for this study were evaluated differently across the two different types of travel experience. These findings provide partial support for the hypothesis.

4.4 Other Relationships between Variables

To conclude the data analysis, other relationships between variables were examined in this research. It was done so because the survey provided a large amount of relevant information which could be analyzed in greater depth bringing out additional findings related to the attractiveness of Portugal. Results of Pearson’s Chi-Square Tests showed whether there was an association between two categorical variables or not.

At first, a relationship between the fact that the respondent has visited Portugal and the opinion about the attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination for Czech tourists was analyzed. Out of the 42.3% of respondents who visited Portugal only 3.8% had the opinion that Portugal is not an attractive destination for Czech tourists. As for non-visitors, 7.7% respondents out of 57.7% who have never been to Portugal answered that Portugal is not attractive for a Czech tourist. The p-value of the Pearson’s Chi-Square test was 0.738 which is far exceeding the standard of 5% and we can conclude that these two variables are independent.

Next, the fact that the respondent visited Portugal was investigated with relation to the opinion about the potential that Portugal has to be visited by greater number of tourists from Czech. Out of the 42.3% respondents who visited Portugal, 34.6% agreed that Portugal has potential to be visited by more tourists from the Czech Republic. Moreover, 50% of respondents out of 57.7% who have not been previously in Portugal also agreed

that Portugal as a tourist destination has potential. After running the statistical test, the p-value of 0.735 was calculated supporting the finding that there is not a dependence between the two variables.

As a third relationship, the evaluation of the quality of promotion of Portugal as a tourist destination and the opinion about the potential of Portugal were examined. From the total of 26 respondents, 22 (84.6%) agreed that Portugal as a tourist destination has potential to be visited by greater amount of Czech tourists. Out of these, 16 evaluated the promotion of Portugal on the Czech marked as “poor” and only six found the promotion “reasonable” including the level “excellent, very good, good and fair.” Only four tour operators think that Portugal does not have the potential towards the future regarding Czech tourists. Out of these, two find the level of promotion “reasonable” and two “poor”. With the p-value of 0.365 of the Pearson Chi-Square test we come to a conclusion that the two variables are not significantly related.

At last, there was analyzed whether the perception of the level of promotion of Portugal in Czech market had influence on the numbers of Czech tourists coming to Portugal with the sampled tour operators. The p-value 0.221 is higher than the significance level 5% meaning that these two variables are also independent.

To sum up, results show that the opinion about both the attractiveness of Portugal as tourism destination and the potential that Portugal has to be visited by a greater number of tourists are not associated with the fact that respondents have visited Portugal. Furthermore, results support that there are no relationship between the quality of promotion of Portugal in the Czech market and both the potential and the number of Czech tourists coming to Portugal.

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Introduction

The last chapter of the study presents the discussion of the research results and offers conclusions based on the analysis of the data. The aim of the dissertation research was to explore the attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination as perceived by Czech tour operators. For the aim, an electronic survey was conducted and 26 responses from the Czech tour operators were analyzed. This research investigated several issues: a general opinion which tour operators have about Portugal as a tourist destination in relation to the Czech market; the importance of specific touristic attributes which contribute to the overall attractiveness of the tourism destination Portugal; the influence of a previous visitation experience of the tour operator workers on the perceived attractiveness of Portugal; the position which Portugal as a tourist destination occupies within the supply of the tour operators; and possible ways of increasing the number of Czech tourists coming to Portugal.

5.2. Discussion of results

The study results indicate that Portugal does not belong among tourist destinations frequented by Czech tourists in large quantities. In particular, in 2012, the Portuguese borders were crossed by 32 thousand Czech tourists which represents approximately 0.5% of the overall number of visitors. In contrast, Spain as a neighboring country welcomed about five times more tourists from the Czech Republic. It is necessary to state the question “Why?” One of the important findings of this research is that financial demands and weak promotion of the destination on the Czech market are perceived as the main reasons why more Czech tourists do not chose Portugal as their vacation destination. Moreover, about 70% of tour operators find the level of promotion poor. In other words, Portugal is viewed as an expensive and distant destination about which potential customers do not have adequate information and are not familiar with. A positive finding is that almost 85% of respondents think that Portugal does have potential to be visited by greater number of tourists from Czech. As discussed in the literature review, destinations with positive, strong and more favorable images have a greater chance to be selected by tourists. Regarding the image of Portugal in the eyes of people from the Czech Republic, the destination is viewed mainly as a sun and beach destination, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and being famous for its wine especially from the area of Porto. This result

is supported by the research of Balogu and Brinberg (1997) who studied affective images of tourist destinations, specifically 11 Mediterranean countries. According to their research, Portugal is perceived as a “relaxing destination” when compared for example with Spain being perceived as “exciting and pleasant.”

The dissertation also aimed to discover the importance of touristic attributes contributing to the attractiveness of a destination Portugal from the perspective of Czech tour operators. Data results demonstrated that the same attributes were classified in approximately the same rank by visitors and non-visitors. Furthermore, only five of the 17 touristic attributes examined in this study were evaluated differently across the two different types of travel experience. Interestingly, it can be concluded that, regardless the personal visitation, the tour operators perceive the tourist destination Portugal in almost identical way. Historical attractions, scenery and climate were evaluated as the three most important attributes contributing to the attractiveness of the tourist destination Portugal. Since there are no differences in the relative importance of touristic attributes between visitors and non-visitors, there can be development of new promotional materials and activities such as promotional campaigns based on the “best” attributes.

Among other objectives of this study, there was the examination of the position of Portugal within the offer of Czech tour operators. It can be stated that the offer of tours to Portugal is sufficient in the Czech market and tourists have a good variety of options to choose from. Almost half of the sampled tour operators offer from 10 to 50 tours every year. The offer includes all parts of Portugal which are generally popular with tourists. The most visited are Lisbon, Madeira, and a tour through Portugal. There can be also found special trips, for instance trips to Lisbon, or sport-oriented trips focused on golf and surf. Further, a standard trip to Portugal has the following characteristics: an excursion tour, transportation by airplane, length of stay 6-9 days, accommodation in hotel, half-board meals, and price per person 601- 800 Euros. One of the important results reveals that the average number of Czech tourists who travel to Portugal every year is only about 2.3% with relation to all realized tours of the sampled tour operators. This number is quite low when it is taken into consideration the options which tourists have, nevertheless, this corresponds with the poor level of promotion in the Czech market and low awareness about Portugal as a possible holiday destination. An entire 2/3 of the tour operators do not take any further steps in strengthening the position of Portugal as a tourist

destination in their offer. It can be concluded that tourists have a good amount of options to choose from, however, there is a lack of information, marketing materials and any form of PR. An essential step is the enhancement of positive presentation of Portugal as a tourist destination to potential clients, in the tour operators as well as in media, especially before the vacation season.

This dissertation provides suggestions about how to attract more tourists from the Czech Republic. As already discussed, the promotional activities of Portugal as a tourist destination must be extended and strengthened. Improvements should be done on the side of the tour operators as well as Portuguese authorities dealing with promotion of their country. The Portuguese authorities should establish new innovative activities and campaigns concerning the support of visitation to their country by Czech tourists. One of the expedient ways is the presence on international tourism fairs in the Czech Republic. The tourism trades are very popular by people interested in traveling and tourism and any reference to Portugal as possible tourist destination including promotional videos, photos and presentation of local natural and historical riches can influence the customer's idea about the country as a possible destination to be visited. Next, tours to Portugal must become affordable for the Czech clientele and Portugal should be presented as a destination with similar prices compared to the Czech Republic. Also, the attention should be turned to the insufficient accessibility of the destination, particularly to no direct air connections with low cost airlines to Algarve and Madeira. At the moment, the only direct connection is between Prague and Lisbon with TAP Portugal. Finally, in order to lure more tourists, a great effort should be made in using the unique resources which Portugal offers, for example sport-oriented tours such as golf or surf tours and a gastronomical experience of traditional Portuguese cuisine.

In conclusion, tourists are faced with a great choice of tourist destinations as possible options for spending their vacations nowadays. The number of destinations grows every year and the competition for luring tourists strengthens. In order to attract potential customers and gain a competitive advantage, tourists must perceive the existing tourist destination as attractive and unique, providing a memorable experience. Hence, the awareness and knowledge about the destination must be well communicated to potential customers as the information provided has a significant influence on the tourists' destination choice. A coordinated approach to destination management, marketing

strategies, planning and development, image building activities, comprehensive marketing promotions, monitoring competitors and effective and efficient work of tourism industry entities such as tour operators are essential preconditions for the success of a tourist destination. This dissertation dealt with the attractiveness of Portugal. A survey has been done among Czech tour operators investigating their perception of Portugal as a tourist destination. The results prove that Portugal is not considered as a key destination for Czech tourists. However, regarding its attractiveness, there is good potential which Portugal as a tourist destination has, and which should be utilized in the future. It cannot be said that the low number of tourists coming from the Czech Republic is caused by the destination itself having nothing to offer. On the contrary. Portugal is a country with great historical and cultural riches, with diversity of nature and a favorable climate. It is a safe destination with friendly and hospitable local inhabitants. The country possesses several unique resources which many tourists would appreciate if they knew about. Portugal as a tourist destination has several significant opportunities in the relation to the Czech market. There exists the possibility of exploring an unexperienced destination by Czech tourists. The interest of Czech tourists for golf and surf, for which Portugal has great conditions, has been increasing in recent years. The destination can attract many young people who want to travel and study abroad (e.g. Erasmus program). Additionally, the destination has been stably offered by Czech tour operators which is a positive sign towards the future. A visible obstacle in development of Czech tourism to Portugal is the lack of information about the advantages of Portugal as a tourist destination and the poor level of promotion in the Czech market. These areas require a lot of work to be done. Through the realization of improvements on the Czech as well as Portuguese side mainly in the areas of promotion activities, price levels, accessibility, and specialized tours (especially sport-oriented tours) focused on certain segments of tourists, it is possible to achieve a change in thinking of Czech customers and a change in their purchase behavior when considering a destination for their vacation. Moreover, it is necessary to transform the seemingly unfavorable characteristics of the destination such as long distance or financial demands into the country's advantages and through well-designed communication strategies present Portugal to Czech tourists as an undiscovered, exotic, and safe destination which is worth to visit.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Various limitations may exist in this dissertation, which however offer perspectives for future research. The first considers methodological limitation. The survey was web-based, eliminating those tour operators who are not social media users and do not have established web pages. Perhaps due to this fact, the sample size was rather small. If the author of the dissertation was present in the Czech Republic during the period of research, there would be a larger probability of gaining more answers from Czech tour operators. The second limitation considers the conceptual part of the dissertation. It focuses only on the role of tour operators and does not include the roles of other factors within the concept of attractiveness of a destination. The third limitation concerns the lack of prior research on the topic of attractiveness of a tourist destination from the perspective of tour operators.

This study contributes to the understanding of the way Portugal as a tourist destination is perceived in the Czech market. Since the current study was oriented solely on tour operators which include Portugal in the offer, a similar study could be planned among all Czech tour operators and compare the perceptions of those who provide tours to Portugal and those who do not include Portugal in their offer. There are still many issues that can be investigated in the research on destination attractiveness.

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APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

The attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination: the perspective of Czech tour operators

Hello, my name is Kateřina Tomigová and I am a Czech student of a master program Tourism Economics and Regional Development at the University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal. At the moment, I am working on my master thesis with the aim to examine the attractiveness of Portugal as a tourist destination based on the perceptions of the Czech tour operators and its importance within the supply of the tour operators. For gaining the needed information I decided to focus on tour operators which in the Czech Republic offer tours to Portugal. I would like to ask you for filling in this questionnaire results of which will become a part of my thesis and will play a significant role when solving the given issues.

Thank you for your time and cooperation

***Required**

SECTION 1

1.1. What are three words which come to your mind when you think about Portugal as a tourist destination? *

*

*

1.2. In 2012, almost 32 thousand Czech tourists visited Portugal. Do you think that Portugal as a tourist destination has potential to be visited by greater number of tourists from Czech?*

☐

Yes

☐

No

1.3. Do you think that the economic situation of Portugal has a significant influence on the inflow of Czech tourists to Portugal? *

☐

Yes

☐

No

1.4. Mark two main reasons why more Czech tourists do not travel to Portugal: *

☐

Long distance

☐

Financial demands

☐

Inconvenient climate

- ☐ Weak promotion of destination
- ☐ Low awareness of Portugal as a tourist destination
- ☐ Destination is not attractive for a Czech tourist
- ☐ Other:

1.5. How do you evaluate the quality of promotion of Portugal as a tourist destination on the Czech market? *

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

1.6. Suggest 2 ways how to attract more tourists from the Czech Republic to travel to Portugal: *

*

SECTION 2

ON THE BASIS OF THE TO PERCEPTIONS, PLEASE INDICATE THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF EACH ATTRIBUTE CONTRIBUTING TO THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION PORTUGAL

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Moderately important	Very Important
Climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability/quality of accommodations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports/recreational opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uniqueness of local people's life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical attractions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural attractions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Festivals/special events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Accessibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attitude toward tourists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability/quality of local transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety and security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION 3

3.1. In which year were tours to Portugal added to the offer: *

3.2. What parts of Portugal can be visited with the TO? *

- ☐ Algarve
- ☐ Lisbon
- ☐ Porto
- ☐ Madeira
- ☐ Azores
- ☐ A tour through Portugal
- ☐ Portugal + Spain combination
- ☐ Other:

3.3. Do you offer any of following specials tours to Portugal? *

- ☐ Weekend tours
- ☐ Sport-oriented tours
- ☐ Tours for seniors
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other:

3.4. The average number of tours which your TO offers to Portugal every year is: *

- ☐ ≤10
- ☐ 11-50
- ☐ 51 – 100
- ☐ ≥101

3.5. How many tourists on an average travel with your TO every year to Portugal? (Express in % with relation to all realized tours): *

3.6. Mark two months during which Czech tourists travel to Portugal the most: *

- ☐ January

- ☐ February
- ☐ March
- ☐ April
- ☐ May
- ☐ June
- ☐ July
- ☐ August
- ☐ September
- ☐ October
- ☐ November
- ☐ December

3.7. Does your TO promote tours to Portugal in any special way? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, how?

3.8. Mark characteristics of a standard trip offered to Portugal:

Type of trip: *

- ☐ Package tour
- ☐ Excursion tour

Transportation: *

- ☐ Airplane
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Own
- ☐ Combination Airplane + Bus

Length of stay: *

- ☐ ≤5 days
- ☐ 6 – 9 days
- ☐ 10 – 12 days
- ☐ ≥ 13 days

Accommodation: *

- ☐ Hotel
- ☐ Apartment

- ☐ Villa
- ☐ Other:

Meals: *

- ☐ All-inclusive
- ☐ Full-board
- ☐ Half-board
- ☐ Self-catering

Price per person: *

- ☐ ≤ 400 Euros
- ☐ 401 – 600 Euros
- ☐ 601 – 800 Euros
- ☐ 801 – 1000 Euros
- ☐ ≥ 1001 Euros

SECTION 4

PLEASE ANSWER THE LAST SET OF QUESTIONS REGARDING YOU AND YOUR TOUR OPERATOR

Age *

- ☐ ≤ 24
- ☐ 25 - 34
- ☐ 35 – 44
- ☐ 45 – 54
- ☐ ≥ 55

Have you ever visited Portugal? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Your position in TO: *

Name of TO:

Year of creation of TO: *

Size of TO *

- ☐ Small (≤ 5 employees)
- ☐ Medium (6 to 50 employees)

- ☐ Large (≥ 51 employees)

Annual number of serviced clients *

- ☐ Do not wish to answer
- ☐ ≤ 1000
- ☐ 1001 – 5000
- ☐ 5001 - 50 000
- ☐ $\geq 50\,001$

Specialization of TO *

- ☐ Outgoing tourism
- ☐ Incoming tourism
- ☐ Domestic tourism
- ☐ Other:

THANK YOU!