IMPACT OF DESTINATION IMAGE
ON SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

Andrea Králiková[1], Astrid Peruthová[2], Kateřina Ryglová[1]

[1] Department of Marketing and Trade, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 1, 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic

[2] Department of Regional Development, The College of Regional Development and Banking Institute – Ambis, a.s., Mezírka 775/1, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

Tourist destinations are currently subjects of strong competition and their visitors are influenced by various factors, including the image of a destination. This paper deals with the topic of destination image and its influence on the tourist overall satisfaction and loyalty towards a destination. The study is aiming at domestic tourists in the Czech Republic. The data were obtained through a questionnaire survey with quota sampling. Sixteen destination image factors were researched. Nine of the factors have an influence on overall satisfaction (the most influential one being the attractiveness of a destination, the uniqueness of a destination and the friendly acceptance by the locals). Eight factors were statistically proved to have an influence on loyalty by means of oral or online recommendation, with the most influential factor being the sense of security. Finally, four factors have an influence on loyalty by means of the intention to revisit a destination (the uniqueness of a destination, food, the suitability of a destination for summer and all-year-round holiday). The research results enable deeper understanding of the loyalty towards a destination which is very important for destination managers and services providers in destination.

Keywords: tourism, destination image, factors of a destination image, satisfaction, loyalty to a destination

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive tourism marketplace it is crucial to adopt destination strategies and marketing plans to convey a positive message that will be motivating for tourists to visit a certain destination and quite possibly become a loyal visitor. To differentiate individual destinations brands and in order to catch the attention of potential visitors, the combination of destination image and destination personality has been used by destinations marketers (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). Furthermore, destination image is among the factors that play a significant role in creating loyal tourists (Chi and Qu, 2008). Several studies have also focused on specific factors that have an impact on loyalty, like satisfaction (Kozak, 2001), perceived value (Petrick *et al.*, 2001) or novelty seeking (Jang and Feng, 2007). In the Czech environment comparable studies do not exist yet although domestic tourism is a very promising branch, especially with regards to the current safety situation in the world and the increasing significance of the safety factor in the destination choice process (Kovari and Zimanyi, 2011). The number of domestic tourists in the Czech Republic was growing every year until 2017. The number of domestic tourists slightly decreased in 2018. About 60% of domestic tourists who travel for

4 or more overnight stays are in the Czech Republic. The percentage is even lower (6%) within domestic tourists who travel for maximum 3 overnight stays (ČSÚ, 2019).

Bigné *et al.* (2001) suggest that destination image and relationship with tourists needs to be handled proactively in order to become a lasting one. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) suggest that simply satisfying customers is no longer sufficient because it does not always lead to loyalty. As a result of that, according to Hsu *et al.* (2009) researchers should always be considering visitors´ loyalty and not only their satisfaction. Several studies, such as Chi and Qu (2008), consider revisit intentions and positive WOM recommendations as indicators of loyalty. Therefore, it is inevitable to know which factors have an impact on loyalty. The main aim of this article is then the examination of the relative influence of destination image on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, the partial goal is to evaluate the importance of destination image factors regarding specific types of visitors.

One of the first definitions of destination image came from Crompton in 1979 – he stated that the image of a destination is a set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people or a group of people attach to a given place (in Hung *et al.*, 2012). More complex definition was stated by Sirgy and Su (2000). According to them destination image is any oral, visual or written portrayal of a place that is given by someone and can be transmitted to other people. Destination image embodies subjective knowledge of a destination, whether it is expensive, urban, cold or exotic one (Ekinci, 2003).

The image formation process is a continuum of individual agents that act independently and in combination they form unique destination image. Gartner (1993) classified the agents into induced images created by suppliers or providers, organic images that are based on tourists´ own experience or their friends and family and lastly autonomous images formed by media, guides, etc.

Prayag (2007) sees destination image as a multidimensional concept with three primary dimensions – cognitive, affective and conative. Beliefs and knowledge about the physical parts of a destination belong to the cognitive part. The affective dimension deals with feelings that visitors have towards the destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). The third conative dimension evolved from cognitive and affective images and is considered to be analogous to behavior and refers to the final choice of a place (Prayag, 2007). Most studies have paid attention only to the cognitive dimension of destination image. The reason for that is that the cognitive dimension of image is directly observable, descriptive and measurable (Walmsley and Young, 1998). On the other hand, Jeong *et al.* (2009) suggest that both cognitive and affective images are the best predictors of visit intentions.

When tourists are deciding which destination to visit, they first eliminate a number of destinations on the ground of cost, safety and many other factors. Then, after they have reduced the choice set, they are likely to choose the destination based on a favourable image (Gartner, 1989).

Image is the key determinant of destination positioning. Therefore, the process of destination image formation is complex. According to Hunt (1975) the main goal of destination positioning strategy is to induce positive images already held by the visitors of a destination, then correct the negative images and establish a new image. Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993: 141) simplify the process into following: 'Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with the place. They are the product of the mind trying to process Destination Marketing and Technology 24/7 and essentialize the huge amounts of data about a place.'

Not only destination positioning, but also a decision-making process is influenced by the images of a destination. Those destination images depend on a number of factors such as prior knowledge of the destination, travel experience, cultural influences (like nationality or religion) and many more (Money and Crotts, 2003).

Throughout the years there has been a number of studies dealing with factors influencing destination image. According to Kim and Richardson (2003) the image of a destination depends on the geographical location, natural sources, climate conditions and facilities provided by the destination. Beerlie and Martin (2004) dealt with a different set of factors: natural resources, leisure and recreation, natural environment, general infrastructure, culture, history and arts, social environment, tourist infrastructure, politics and economics and the atmosphere of the place.

According to Molina *et al.* (2010) using information sources as a promotion tool also has a strong influence on destination image formed in minds of tourists. What could also be included here are various destination awards or certificates (e.g. eco-labeling) which are considered to be a marketing message towards a consumer as well (Ryglova, 2007).

What also contributes to overall destination image is the information gained from family, friends and various media sources, as well as a tourist's previous travel experience with the destination (Roodurmun and Juwaheer, 2010). On the other hand, overall image is the most important factor regarding the intention to revisit the same destination (Alcaniz *et al.*, 2005).

According to Gunn (1972) all cities and countries have organic images (impression of a destination without physically visiting the place) that are the result of history, geography and other non-tourism information sources. Therefore, some potential

visitors may have incomplete organic images about a particular place. The same results were also proved by Leisen (2001) in his study.

To differentiate a particular destination brand from others, destination marketers are using the combination of destination image and destination personality (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011).

Destination image influences future tourist behavior. The research done by Park and Nukoo (2013) showed that feelings gained by tourists after their visit to a particular destination affects not only WOM communication, but also final recommendations. As a result of this, destination image also affects the total number of the visits to a destination. If the image is good, there is a higher chance that previous visitors will visit the destination again (Assaker *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, a destination lacking a favourable or positive image will find it difficult to compete in an extremely competitive area like tourism. (Pike, 2002).

Hsu and Liping (2009) propose that destination image can also positively influence visitors' satisfaction and trust towards the destination. Tribe and Snaith (1988) define tourist satisfaction as a degree to which a tourist's assessment of the attributes of a destination exceeds his or her expectations for those attributes. Other authors such as Ryan and Cove (2005) argue that satisfaction is based on good feelings that visitors gained at the destination. According to Chen and Chen (2010) tourist satisfaction is a function of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experience.

The main factor that influences the tourist satisfaction with a destination, according to Baker and Crompton (2010), is the quality of the most important establishment in the destination. Other factors that have an influence on the overall tourist satisfaction are price and the perceived value of products or services offered in the destination (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2006).

Tourist satisfaction does not only influence the choice of a destination, the usage of products or services – it also influences the intention to return. Like destination image, satisfaction with a destination leads to revisit intentions and positive WOM recommendations which are also indicators of loyalty (Kozak and Remmington, 2000).

Most tourism studies agree that there is a strong relationship between tourist satisfaction, loyalty and revisit intentions (ex. Yoon and Usal, 2005; Awadzi and Panda, 2007). On the other hand, there are few studies that deny the positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention (ex. Um *et al.*, 2006).

According to Chon (1992), if destination visitors have higher levels of self-image connected to the given destination, they will also have higher levels of satisfaction with this particular destination.

Not only is tourist destination image important regarding tourist satisfaction with the given destination, it also influences tourists' behavior like on-site experiences, evaluations and destination loyalty for particular destination (Crompton, 1979; Jenkins, 1999).

Loyal tourists are more likely to promote a destination in better light, they are also more likely to spend more time in the destination and consume more goods. With regard to marketing costs, loyal tourists are less cost-consuming than the ones who are visiting the destination for the first time (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999 cited in Thang *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, Kotler (2007) stated that a loyal customer is more likely to spread positive recommendations about the destination. Wang *et al.* (2010) also added that tourists who are satisfied with their travel experiences are more willing to visit the same place again.

In the process of creating tourist loyalty, destination image plays a significant role. Bigné *et al.* (2001) also advise that the relationship with tourists has to be handled proactively, in order to become a lasting one. A traveller's perception of service experience after visiting the particular destination is a key concept of destination loyalty (Chiu *et al.*, 2016).

Positive WOM is very likely to create favourable images about the given destination. On the other hand, the negative WOM might have damaging effects on destination image and the intention to visit the destination (Zhang *et al.*, 2014). The study of Lu *et al.* (2016) also showed that WOM received before making a decision to purchase can enhance or reduce perceived trust and perceived risk.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is aiming at domestic tourism of the Czech Republic; therefore, the primary data were obtained through personal and electronic questionnaire among the Czech Republic population. Quota sampling based on gender, age and district of the Czech Republic was applied. The total number of respondents was $n = 435$. The sample structure is described in Tab. I. Going further, only the respondents who stayed out of residence overnight in a Czech tourism destination last year were taken into consideration. The data were mostly collected from the 1st May to the 31st June 2018. Overall, 50.8% of respondents were women and 49.2% were men. Furthermore, the respondents were divided into six categories based on their age.

The questions aiming to explore the image, loyalty and satisfaction were formulated on a five-point Likert scale, where the number five represents strong agreement with the given statement. The 16 research factors of destination image (see Tab. II first column) that were evaluated in the questionnaire were formulated based on previous

I: *Sample structure*

Category of respondent	Absolute number of respondents	Relative number of respondents
18–26 years old	105	21.0%
27–35 years old	71	14.2%
36–45 years old	114	22.8%
46–55 years old	83	16.6%
56–65 years old	59	11.8%
over 66 years old	68	13.6%
Men	246	49.2%
Women	254	50.8%
Less than high school graduate	23	4.6%
High school graduate with diploma	96	19.2%
High school graduate without diploma	229	45.8%
College or university graduate	152	30.4%

Source: own research

studies (Kim and Richardson, 2003; Beerlie and Martin, 2004; Prayag, 2007; Park and Nunkoo, 2013). Specifically, the factors are as follows: the attractiveness of a destination, natural attractions, cultural attractions, the suitability of a destination for summer holiday, the suitability for winter holiday, the suitability for all-year-round holiday, food, infrastructure of transportation, the level of personnel quality in tourism services, the friendly acceptance by the locals, the sense of security, the overcrowding of a destination, destination cleanliness, additional infrastructure, the uniqueness of a destination and accommodation.

To find out whether the evaluation of those 16 image factors depends on gender, economic activity, the purpose of the visit, the length of stay and on the decision with whom the respondents visited a destination, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. It is a non-parametric equivalent of one-way analysis of variance that had to be used due to the non-normal data distribution. The rejection of the null hypothesis that the evaluation of a particular image factor has the same distribution for each group (e.g. gender or economic activity) confirms that differences are statistically significant. This means that the dependence of the particular factor of image on e.g. gender has been proved.

The impact of the factors of image on the customer´s overall satisfaction with the given destination and his or her loyalty towards this destination is analyzed by the multiple regression analysis and OLS method (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). The loyalty of visitors is reflected by their intention to revisit the destination and by their willingness to recommend the destination either online or orally to their friends and relatives (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

RESULTS

The following Tab. II states the order of image factors based on the average evaluation of image factors by respondents. Number 5 indicates strong agreement with the given statement about the image factor and on the other end of the scale number 1 indicates strong disagreement with the given statement about image factor. It also shows the results of the dependence analysis on gender, economic activity, purpose of the visit, length of the stay and on the decision with whom the respondent visited the destination. The value YES means that the dependence of the factor on the given variable was proved at 5% significance level.

The dependence on gender was proved in 7 out of 16 image factors, which accounts for almost 44%. The seven factors are the attractiveness of a destination, natural attractions, the suitability of a destination for summer and all-year-round holiday, the sense of security, destination cleanliness and additional infrastructure. Furthermore, women evaluated all factors except the overcrowding of a destination higher than men. The dependence on economic activity was proved only in case of factors of the attractiveness of a destination and the suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday. That accounts only for 12.5%. Overall, the evaluation of 11 image factors was proved to be dependent on the purpose of the visit. That accounts for almost 69%. Four image factors (25%) – natural attractions, the suitability of a destination for summer and winter holiday and destination cleanliness – were proved to be dependent on the length of stay. Visitors who have visited the particular destination for the period of 11 to 14 days have evaluated 10 out of 16 image factors higher than any other length of the stay. Lastly, the dependence on the decision with whom the

II: *Result of dependence analysis*

	Perceived image factor	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	KW test gender	KW test econ. activity	KW test purpose of the visit	KW test length of stay	KW test with whom they visited
1.	Attractiveness of a destination	4.48	5.00	0.77	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
2.	Suitability of a destination for summer holiday	4.37	5.00	0.87	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3.	Friendly acceptance by the locals	4.24	4.00	0.76	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
4.	Sense of security	4.20	4.00	0.91	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
5.	Natural attractions	4.13	4.00	1.04	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6.	Destination cleanliness	4.13	4.00	1.00	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
7.	Uniqueness of a destination	4.10	4.00	0.96	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
8.	Cultural attractions	4.06	4.00	0.97	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
9.	Food	3.98	4.00	0.87	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
10.	Accommodation	3.91	4.00	0.92	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
11.	Suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday	3.85	4.00	1.06	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
12.	Level of personnel quality in tourism services	3.84	4.00	0.85	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
13.	Additional infrastructure	3.73	4.00	0.96	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
14.	Suitability of a destination for winter holiday	3.65	4.00	1.18	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
15.	Infrastructure of transportation	3.64	4.00	0.91	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
16.	Overcrowding of a destination	3.29	3.00	1.18	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree
Source: own research

respondents visited the destination was proved in case of 9 factors, which is little more than 56%. The dependence on age was not statistically proved in any of the destination image factors.

Regarding the significance of destination image factors for domestic tourists of the Czech Republic, the most significant factors are the attractiveness of a destination followed by the suitability of a destination for summer holiday and friendly acceptance by the locals. On the other hand, the least significant factors are the suitability of a destination for winter holiday, the infrastructure of transportation and finally the overcrowding of the destination. Regardless the mean value, all factors except for the image factor of overcrowding of the destination have median 4 or higher. These values show that all factors of image are relevant for respondents.

The tourists' perception of the destination image factors is crucial for effective destination marketing and management. Understanding the importance of image factors regarding the tourist satisfaction and loyalty better might possibly lead to better targeted marketing strategy. More importantly, knowing which destination image factors are significant for a certain type of visitors, regarding their gender, economic activity, the purpose of their visit, the length of stay and with whom they visited the destination, might help destination managers understand their target group better. This information might also be used when creating the destination strategy or the marketing plan.

Overall, the tourists were highly satisfied with the destination they visited. Similarly, the tourists also evaluated the loyalty indicators very highly. The average values for the overall satisfaction and loyalty indicators towards a destination are mentioned in the Tab. III below.

The regression models were used to explore the influence of relevant factors of destination image on the overall satisfaction of the visitors of a destination and their loyalty towards the destination. The

III: *The average values for the overall satisfaction and loyalty indicators*

	Average value
Overall satisfaction	4.47
Online recommendation	3.63
Oral recommendation	4.29
Revisit intention	4.27

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree
Source: own research

IV: *Regression analysis overall satisfaction*

Overall satisfaction	Reg. coef	P-value
Const	1.604	2.20E-17
Attractiveness of a destination	0.129	3.00E-03
Uniqueness of a destination	0.127	8.05E-05
Friendly acceptance by the locals	0.111	0.0157
Food	0.099	0.0019
Natural attractions	0.079	0.0109
Suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday	0.074	4.40E-03
Destination cleanliness	0.062	0.0485
Level of personnel quality in tourism services	0.061	0.0850
Overcrowding of a destination	-0.055	0.0142

$R^2 = 0.459$; R^2 adj. = 0.448, 5% significance level
Source: own research

V: *Regression analysis online recommendation*

Online recommendation	Reg. coef.	P-value
Const	0.724	0.0295
Sense of security	0.218	0.0016
Cultural attractions	0.208	0.0002
Suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday	0.184	0.0006
Natural attractions	0.105	0.0711

$R^2 = 0.166$; R^2 adj. = 0.158, 5% significance level
Source: own research

VI: *Regression analysis oral recommendation*

Oral recommendation	Reg. coef.	P-value
Const	1.236	1.69E-07
Attractiveness of a destination	0.173	1.50E-03
Sense of security	0.133	0.0042
Accommodation	0.126	0.0033
Suitability of a destination for summer holiday	0.119	0.0158
Natural attractions	0.110	0.0067
Infrastructure of transportation	0.071	0.0849

$R^2 = 0.324$; R^2 adj. = 0.314, 5% significance level
Source: own research

following Tab. IV is showing the list of image factors that have an influence on the overall satisfaction. The list is ordered according to their influence on the overall satisfaction, beginning with the most influential one.

The overall satisfaction is mostly influenced by the image factor of the attractiveness of a destination followed by the uniqueness of a destination and the friendly acceptance by the locals. All factors except for overcrowding of a destination have positive impacts on the overall satisfaction. This means that the more crowded the destination is the less satisfied the tourists are in the destination.

The next three Tabs. 5–7 are showing the list of image factors that have an impact on the visitor's loyalty towards a destination. The lists are ordered according to their influence, with the most influential factor as the first. The visitors' loyalty was assessed based on the three criteria – whether the visitor is going to recommend the destination to his or her friends and relatives either online or oral and weather the visitors are planning to revisit the destination.

VII: *Regression analysis intention to revisit*

Intention to revisit	Reg. coef.	P-value
Const	1.463	7.73E-10
Uniqueness of a destination	0.263	1.57E-09
Food	0.183	1.96E-05
Suitability of a destination for summer holiday	0.128	5.90E-03
Suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday	0.114	2.90E-03

R2 = 0.294; R2 adj. = 0.287, 5% significance level
Source: own research

Only 4 image factors have a statistical influence on online recommendation, with most influential factor being the sense of security. Only two factors, namely the suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday and natural attractions, are the same as for the overall satisfaction.

Six factors have been statistically proved to have an impact on oral recommendation. Only two image factors – the attractiveness of a destination and natural attractions – also have an impact on overall satisfaction with a destination. The most influential factor is the previously mentioned attractiveness of a destination followed by the sense of security. Similarly, only two factors – the sense of security and natural attractions – also influence the online recommendation. Overall 8 factors have impacts on the decision whether the visitor will recommend the destination to his or her friends or not.

Only 4 factors have been statistically proved to have an impact on revisit intentions, the most influential factor being the uniqueness of a destination followed by the factor of food. All factors except for the suitability of a destination for summer holiday also have an impact on overall satisfaction.

There is not a single factor that influences all loyalty indicators and also overall satisfaction. Only natural attractions and suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday are influencing three out of four indicators. Specifically, the factor of natural attractions influences the oral and online recommendation and overall satisfaction. On the other hand, the suitability of a destination for all-year-round holiday influences online recommendation, intention to revisit the destination and also the overall satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The most significant image factors are the attractiveness of a destination, the suitability of a destination for summer holiday and the friendly acceptance by the locals. The Czech Republic is not considered to be a typical winter holiday destination. That might be the reason why the image factor of the suitability of a destination for winter holiday is one of the least evaluated image factors for Czech residents (specifically 15th factor

out of 16). On the other hand, the suitability of a destination for summer holiday was the second most evaluated factor. Almost 45% of respondents stated relaxation as the purpose of their visit. Accordingly, the attractiveness of a destination, friendly acceptance by the locals, the sense of security, natural attractions and the cleanliness of a destination are among the most evaluated factors of image for respondents. High ranking of natural attractions might also be caused by the number of national parks and other unique natural spots that the Czech Republic possesses. Also, high ranking of the factor of sense of security might be caused by the general perception regarding the security issues in Europe, caused by number of terrorist attacks that have occurred throughout past years in some European countries. Regardless the situation in Europe, the Czech Republic is considered to be a safe country. In 2018 the Czech Republic was on 7th place regarding the Global Peace Index evaluation. Seeing the Czech Republic as a country with security problems might lead to the decline in the number of potential visitors as well. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain the perception of a safe country. On the other hand, the least significant image factor is overcrowding of a destination. Except for the capital city of Prague, the Czech Republic is not considered to have problems with overcrowding. That might be the reason why domestic tourists are not concerned about this specific image factor and therefore this factor scored the lowest among the 16 researched factors.

Regarding tourist satisfaction and loyalty, the average values of the overall satisfaction and loyalty indicators towards the destination are quite high. The lowest value scored the online recommendation (3,63). It is not surprising that the lowest score can be found in the age group of 66 years old and higher where the mean value is only 2,83. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests the dependence of online recommendations on the age of respondents. Not only are online recommendations depending on the age of respondents, but they are also related to the permanent residence and gender of respondents. Similarly, the dependence on gender was also proved in case of oral recommendations. This indicates that image influences revisit intentions

and at the same time satisfaction influences not only revisit intentions but also the willingness to recommend the destination. In all of those cases, women scored higher average values of loyalty indicators than men did. Lastly, overall satisfaction was proved to be dependent only on a tourist region that they visited. To summarize it, seven out of the sixteen image factors and five out of the seven loyalty indicators were statistically proved to be dependent on gender (loyalty indicators being oral and online recommendations, intention to revisit, overall satisfaction, indicator that image influences revisit intentions and indicator that satisfaction influences revisit and recommendation intentions). Therefore, it is necessary to pay close attention to gender diverse marketing and management plans. It was also necessary to discover the levels of indicators of satisfaction and loyalty in order to explore the importance of the destination image factors on the overall satisfaction and loyalty. For this purpose, the regression models were used.

Fakeye and Crompton (1991) were also evaluating image factors. Their focus was on prospective, first-time and repeat long-stay winter visitors of Rio Grande Valley in Texas. They evaluated 32 image factors, with the most important factor being friendly people. In case of our study, the factor of friendly acceptance by the locals also scored high. It was the third most important factor out of the 16 researched factors. Other two factors also reached results that are quite similar to those in Fakeye´s and Crompton´s study. These were namely the wide variety of types of food, being the fifth most important factor (in our study it was the 9th most important factor), and plentiful cultural and historical sites being the 10th most important factor (the 8th most important factor in our study). On the contrary, attractive scenery was the 15th most important factor, but in our study it was the most significant factor.

Similarly, Gibson *et al.* (2008) were evaluating 24 image factors in order to investigate the image that young Americans held of China. One of their researched factors were also cultural attractions and friendly people as in the study by Fakeye and Crompton (1991). Cultural attractions were the 10th most important factor out of 32 researched factors in 1991, the 3rd most important factor out of 24 researched factors in 2008 and the 8th most important factor out of the 16 researched factors in 2018 in our study. The factor which was more

consistent was the one of friendly people. It was the most important factor out of 32 researched factors in 1991, the 4th most important factor out of 24 researched factors in 2008 and the 3th most important factor out of the 16 researched factors in 2018 in our study. If we take a look only at the study by Gibson *et al.* (2008), the factor of natural attractions was the single most important factor (5th factor in our study). On the other hand, the safety of a destination was the 20th most important factor out of 24 researched factors and clean country was the 23rd most important factor. In our study the situation was rather different. The safety of the destination was the 4th most important factor out of the 16 researched factors and the cleanliness of the country was the 6th most important factor. The biggest difference between these two studies was in the factor concerning the overcrowding of the country. It was the second most important factor in the research done by Gibson *et al.* (2008). On the other hand, it was the least important factor (16th place) in our research. That might be caused by the general perception of China as an overcrowded country.

Kim and Richardson (2003) put the image factors into three major groups – cultural or natural attractions, community characteristics and infrastructure, and basic needs or comfort. From the first group the most significant factor was interesting historical and cultural attractions. This result is different form the results of this study where the more significant factor were natural and not cultural attractions. That is probably caused by the aim of the research. This study was aiming at the domestic tourism of the Czech Republic. On the other hand, Kim and Richardson (2003) were studying the movie-induced image of Vienna. That being said, Vienna possesses many historical and cultural attractions, which is why the factor natural attractions is less significant in case of Vienna. From the second group of factors the least significant factor is personal safety, which is also quite contrary to the results of this study of image of the Czech Republic. This might be caused by the year of 2003 when Kim and Richardson research was conducted in comparison to the current situation in Europe. The results of factors from the last group, i.e. basic needs or comfort, are quite similar to this study. The resemblance might be caused by similarities in perceptions of Vienna and Prague.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides the results of the study concerning the perception of image and its impact on tourist satisfaction and loyalty among residents of the Czech Republic. The evaluation of 16 destination image factors has been done in order to take a closer look at their dependence on the specific group of respondents and their significance regarding the tourist overall satisfaction and loyalty.

The order of these 16 factors differs among men and women and among different age groups. In general, women evaluated the factors higher than men. Taking the age of respondents into account,

the higher evaluation of the image factors becomes more evident at middle age, more specifically between age 27 and 55. Then the significance of the factors decreases with age except for four factors, namely the attractiveness of a destination, natural attractions, food and accommodation. In those four cases the higher evaluation of image factors occurred in the age group of 66 years of age and older. Despite all of this, the dependence of image factors on age was not proved.

The identification of image factors, their significance and dependence on the specific group can be used for destination management or marketing to evaluate the image of the specific destination better. It also provides more detailed information concerning which part of the destination image destination marketers or managers should focus on, regarding their specific target group. Understanding the image factors better can also improve their competitiveness in the current tourism market and support the efficiency of positioning strategy setting in the particular target markets.

Due to quota sampling based on gender and age, the results could be generalized on domestic tourism in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, the quota sampling based on administrative regions in the Czech Republic was not fulfilled entirely. The further research could therefore use quota sampling based also on administrative regions to secure even more representative results. In further research it would be suitable to consider the influence of a respondent's personal features that might have a significant impact on the loyalty towards the destination, especially in case of the indicator of revisiting the destination. Further research could be also focused on destination image in a specific type of destination, ex. wine or countryside destination.

Acknowledgements

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Contact information

Andrea Králiková: xkraliko@node.mendelu.cz
Astrid Peruthová: a.peruthova@gmail.com
Kateřina Ryglová: katerina.ryglova@mendelu.cz