INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
IN TOURISM PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION

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Abstract. Successful management of any international tourism business enterprise involves integration of intercultural communication principles. Considering the complex character of tourism product distribution channels, tourism organizations often seek to find the most efficient ways to deliver proper information on their products to their end customers. Cultural and communication differences may cause disappointments and complaints if information is not delivered properly while such situations may seriously influence organization's ability to maintain its cooperation models with the existing partners and may influence organization's reputation, thus, reducing its competitiveness. Tourists, originating from 12 different world countries within the period of two summer tourism seasons, travelling on a multi-destination tour to the Baltic States had been questioned if the information they had been provided with before travelling – while booking the particular tour, corresponded to the program they had received during the tour and if the tour program purchased from their travel agent corresponded to the program they had received on-site. 1330 questionnaires have been analysed before making conclusions. The aim of the research was to identify consequences of communication, the impact of cultural differences on information distribution and how it could affect the management of an international tourism enterprise. The results have been analysed according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions model, identifying interaction between cultural dimensions and their expressions in information delivery and correspondence of the provided information and the received product. The paper analyses the results of the quantitative research that indicates the impact of cultural differences in a variety of ways and proposes further research opportunities.

Key words: *intercultural communication, tourism enterprises, management*
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Introduction

In the context of management, communication subsists as interpersonal communication, composed by verbal communication and written communication, group and organizational communication which can be analyzed both, as vertical or horizontal communication. Vertical communication can be upward or downward, while horizontal communication is lateral communication between same level standing employees within an organization or between structures of an organization within the same organization

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(Griffin, 1990: 554; Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, 2002: 323-324). Structural transformation of organizations and emergence of new business organization forms, new interaction models between business organizations determine the importance of communication as a management task not only within an organization but between organizations, interacting in a global business environment. Information, deliverable from transmitter to receiver needs to be delivered properly to avoid loss of its meaning. Having multiple intermediaries involved it might become a challenging task. The importance of communication in management is not a recent subject. Historically, communication in the context of management has been analyzed as a tool to avert eventual conflicts between employers and employees or to determine common goals of the organization (Pigors, 1952: 508). Presently, with development of knowledge organizations and knowledge workers, communication has developed as a tool improving organization's performance, knowledge exchange processes and exchange of information processes between organization owners and the knowledge workers. Until late 60-ties of the 20th century, mostly vertical communication in formal and informal organizations was considered, as this type of communication described relations existing between employers and employees (Albaum, 1964: 24). Simply approaching, communication is about transmitter's interest to receive only feedback about successful delivery of the transmitted message (Haney, 1964: 128). Alternatively, in the context of management, interpersonal communication skills are among core competences in making successful deals (Knowles, 1958). Communication as interpersonal skill exists in different forms and levels and becomes apparent as communication between same level communicators, employers and employees, clients, suppliers and other external agents (Bardia, 2010: 28).

The importance of culture in management

Presently, communication is considered an important task for managers, emphasizing the impact of communication in achieving organization's goals. Communication is present in a list of organization management related activities, such as development of organization's culture, internal environment, as well as knowledge transition and sharing. It has certain importance in maintaining organization's competitiveness as a result of effective knowledge transfer into the organization from external sources and among members of organization itself (Davenport, Prusak, 1988:88). Knowledge transfer is a social process, where the essence of knowledge transfer is to achieve not only effective knowledge sharing system, but its transfer aiming at sharing deepened, rich and verbally not explicit knowledge (O'Dell, Hubert, 2011: 129). Knowledge organizations possess intellectual capital, encompassed in minds of their people. For those organizations, primary dealing with providing services to their customers, the non-material assets are of increasing importance and efficient employment of these assets occurs through communication (Denning, 2011: 152). Through communication organization seeks to formulate its vision, loyalty, teamwork, priority system, culture, decision-making, result evaluation and customer relations (Hamm, 2011: 183). For organizations working in the global business environment, information, knowledge and its transfer into the organization and within it, is more complex, because cultural differences require further attention. Knowledge of cultural differences often is considered a tool, supporting organization's ability to maintain competitive positions operating in the global business environment.

Although, most touristic activities could be local, internationalization of consumer and service production processes has turned touristic activities into international ones. It determines the need to explore tourism from the perspective of international business environment, which logically involves also intercultural discourse. Intercultural communication is an important dimension of guest-host relations (Scherle, Coles, 2008: 124-125). Although, intercultural communication as a part of strategy is a common

subject for organizations, the importance of this communication is developing as an increasingly important subject.

International tourism has been developing as the privilege of Western society for a number of decades adapting the existing tourism production and operation approaches to those societies. Present international tourism business situation with the increasing importance of the new and fast emerging markets urges to revise the classical approaches to tourism production, distribution and operation. This concerns also communication used to interact with existing and potential customers promoting and selling tourism product. Intercultural communication, as a part of seller – buyer interaction is developing as an important part of organization's system. It is more and more often used in improving the existing or in developing new marketing strategies; in analysing product distribution channels and in maintaining operational standards and their quality. Considering that tourism business environment is becoming more globalized, facing new market entries, new interactions between previously unknown cultures, management of tourism organizations cannot ignore these visible challenges. International tourism organizations are forced to operate in a completely new international tourism business environment, where traditional hosts meet new, previously not well known guests. For organizations operating in such dynamic and rapidly transforming environment it is important to distance from the past, often traditional and well known practices, making good use of the new opportunities (Rogers, 1993). It is often emphasized, that approach, integrating intercultural communication principles in the existing business strategies should be considered as issue of business survival (Paul, 1996). It is necessary to respect the presence of culturally different customers; tourism business organizations are not isolated from the contemporary realities of entire business environment.

The above mentioned conditions invite contemporary management, especially managers of international tourism business studies to look for interdisciplinary approaches, to develop new business organization models and management strategies. Although, there is no exclusive business management model based on the principles of intercultural communication, there are certain opportunities proposing integration of intercultural communication into business management. These are approaches respecting culture as a variable defining the limit of its influence. Even the word *culture* is used in many different ways and there is no unique system how to use it as a tool in business management and development, there are several approaches to it. These are theories, which provide unique opportunities for management studies. Among them, Hofstede's cultural dimensions model is used most often. Cultural dimensions show how societies differ from each other and at what score they differ. Most often five dimensions are used, even though, more dimensions are developed (Koopman, Den Hartog, Konrad, et. all, 1999, Jandt, 2009: 159). These dimensions are mostly used to describe the culture of particular countries, not all dimensions are used to make correlations with other subjects, including management. In 1980 Geert Hofstede (Geert Hofstede), in order to determine the value dimensions across cultures, conducted the study, which resulted in identifying the first cultural dimensions: individualism (the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups), masculinity (gender roles), power distance (the degree to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions adopt and expect that power is distributed unequally) uncertainty avoidance (organization's tolerance of uncertainty and insecurity) and long-term orientation dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Minkov, Hofstede, 2011: 12; Jandt, 2009: 159). These dimensions are considered to be the basis for further studies analyzing the importance of cultural differences in social interactions between people or organizations. However, for specific research purposes, implementation of each particular dimension needs to be examined. For social process related studies individualism-collectivisms, uncertainty avoidance dimension, and power distance dimension can be considered the most flexible for further interpretation.

Individualism-collectivism cultural division can also be seen in psychological studies and analysis of individual treatment groups (Schwartz, 1988), determining that the individualistic alternative is collectivist. This division can be formulated stating that for collectivist cultures it is essential to assess the individual conduct of interaction with a group (Watkins, Liu, 1996). Individualist and collectivist

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cultures also differ in their approaches to expressed emotions towards a certain situation, an event, a happening or even some kind of service and the service provider, which allows the service industries to use this when analyzing various interactions. Customers, originating from individualist cultures pay more attention to individual preferences and needs, while, for the customers from collectivist cultures, group expectations and needs are taken into account, and these cultures consider inner emotions and subjective feelings which is different in individualist cultures where emotions tell about the reality of change (Mesquita, 2001).

Also, uncertainty avoidance dimension allows understanding different cultures as the uncertainty avoidance dimension score expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. These differences are characterized by avoidance of unspecified points of importance of the structure. For some people the unknown cultures pose a threat, as opposed to others characterized by low avoidance of uncertainty and the unknown who are willing to take more risks and experience (Litvin, Crotss, Hefner, 2004: 30). And finally, power distance dimension refers to the way how subordinates perceive what superiors deliver and how they form interpersonal relationship.

As culture is a statist itself and cannot be used directly to explain the phenomenon, relations between individuals, societies or groups, codification is needed. Codification of culture is as a prerequisite for realizing any type of research, aiming at measuring cultural significance. It is a condition for any interdisciplinary research where culture is considered a variable. Through culture individuals and societies create order of believes, values, norms and attitudes, categorize them into good or bad, right or wrong etc. (Hofstede, 1989). Hofstede's contribution, applying certain structure to cultures, is essential for analyzing the international business environment and exploring communication and different forms of social interaction between individuals and groups. Among other approaches, Hofstede doctrine has five major advantages (Minkov, Hofstede, 2011). First, cultural dimensions have been the first universal approach to measuring and analyzing differences between two or more communities, nations or ethnic groups, secondly, cultural dimension variables and scores allow correlations between nations rather than individuals or organizations, thus assigning versatile application opportunities to this model, thirdly, they identify the key issues typical for all organizations, fourthly, they are steady, confirmed by repeated researches and indicating no major variations over the period of more than 30 years. Finally, using cultural dimensions to explore and analyze culture allows us to draw conclusions about organizational or society behavior, management philosophy and general practices.

However, certain criticism is present and it identifies weaknesses of the model, supported by ongoing globalization processes and global migration and the increasing mixture of societies in general. Besides, the model is often criticized considering that only the information technology industry analysis has been considered, and based on that, general conclusion on societies is drawn (Reisinger, 2009). Also methodology has been questioned, as it is based on the assumption of each examined country as a geographical entity, rather than national bodies, excluding the presence of subcultures (Orr, Hauser, 2008; Reisinger, 2009). However, also critics indicate that cultural dimensions model is the most ambitious and extensive model available to use for intercultural studies. This is also a unique model to be used for tourist behavior studies and for analyzing the international character of tourism in general (Manrai, 2011). Also, branding and advertisement studies analyzing customer relations and applicable models in different societies consider this to be the most appropriate approach for defining and exploring cultural differences and their impact on their activities (de Mooji, Hofstede, 2010: 86).

Several authors point out that cultural differences in the tourism sector and tourism organization management are particularly important considering the character of tourism product – it is intangible and consists of a wide range of services while decisions regarding purchase and consumption are determined by cultural differences. Therefore, applying cultural dimensions model, it is possible to analyze the tourist behavior prior to travel purchase and consumption, during the tourism product consumption and after the consumption period (Manrai, Manrai, 2011: 25). It can be used as a tool for market research, exploring

information seeking behavior, travel planning, travel mode choice and other elements (Litvin, Crotto, Hefner, 2004: 33-35).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are dynamic in their nature, as they allow using already defined dimensions supplemented by additional parts, to understand different social phenomenon in the globally changing world as well as relations of individuals and society. These dimensions are not static and they are adjusted and updated, considering the factors affecting cultural transformations and the emerging new issues, actual for societies or individuals interacting in the structures forming society (Reisinger, 2009, Geert Hofstede: hofstede.com). First edition of "Culture and Organization", which is the original source of the culture dimensions model, describes and uses only four dimensions, while the current, updated model, as introduced in 2010, is supplemented by already sixth dimension of indulgence / restraint (devotion / abstinence dimension). According to the researchers, most of the cultural differences, the dynamic nature of the subject of continuing research and virtually any existing model can be further extended, or adapted for specific goals.

Research Results and Discussion

As most incoming tour operators are working with increasing number of different markets representing diversity of cultural backgrounds, they seek to find a system allowing structuring their sales and marketing activities. The management model based on cultural differences would allow organizations to develop reduced number of communication and marketing strategies, at the same time, increasing the number of target markets, using the knowledge of the existing, already developed markets. However, considering complexity of cultural dimensions and the lack of a universal model for performing interpretations of cultural dimensions, the author proposed experimental research model, aiming at identifying the ability to develop it.

Research was carried out during two summer tourism seasons – in 2011 and 2012. All the respondents were participants of guaranteed departure tours in The Baltic States, operated by a tour company. All respondents were customers of the same company and were participants of tours, operated in all three Baltic Countries by the same tour operator, having direct contracting to all contracted suppliers. All respondents had not purchased the product directly from the tour operator, but at their local agencies or from international or foreign tour operators, purchasing products from the local incoming tour operator. Majority of clients had purchased their travel packages through classical tourism product distribution chain, with at least three intermediaries involved between the local incoming tour operator and their travel agencies. This allows understanding and examining the inbound tour operator's ability to efficiently distribute the product and to deliver all information about the product, its contents and organizational aspects to the end customer of their product. Considering the fact that the inbound tour operator has no direct communication with the end customers before their arrival to destination, efficient communication between the inbound operator and their customers is vital, assuring that information about the product is delivered properly to the agency selling the product to the end customers. There are further peculiarities of the product, which define importance of communication and unambiguous information delivery – all the tours are operated by bilingual tour escorts, speaking either English and German or Italian and Spanish; a list of optional excursions which can be ordered either in advance or on the spot – directly from the tour leader, is offered; fixed time is given for welcome meeting with the tour leader on the day of arrival and it is explained how to act in case of any emergency of service failure. When creating the product, the inbound tour operator has emphasized the international character of the product, thus reducing the risk of dissatisfaction due to the same fact.

All questionnaires were distributed to the end customers of the product in personalized welcome packages at the start of the tour, then, the tour leaders reminded their guests to return them at the end of

the tour, submitting them directly to customers, leaving at the reception of the last hotel of the program, sending them directly to the office by e-mail or fax. All questionnaires had been produced in 5 languages – English, German, Spanish, Italian and French, corresponding to the client structure and the languages in which tours were conducted. In total, 4662 questionnaires were distributed during the summer tourism seasons of 2011 and 2012. Considering that the product had been evaluated by members originating from 28 different countries, the research has been continued for two seasons to assure the proper representation of major markets, where the product is sold (European markets including Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and overseas markets including Australia, the United States of America and South American countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Mexico). It has been noted, that there have not been remarkable customer changes of the selected inbound tour operator which has allowed us to assume that the product distribution conceptually has remained same during these years. Totally, 602 questionnaires in 2011 and 730 in 2012 have been collected from representatives of 27 different countries. However, for further analysis only the countries represented by at least 31 questionnaires were chosen. This was the major limitation as all the studies dealing with cultural differences require a rather high number of different questionnaires to be able to analyze an issue within the discourse of cultural differences. And this has been another reason, why collection of questionnaires was realized during two summer tourism seasons. Each particular country and the total number of the end customers from countries subjected to further analysis were taken into consideration. Table 1 offers figures on the end customers by the country of origin and the collected questionnaires.

Table 1

Summary of End Customers and Questionnaires

Country	Total number of end customers	From total (in %)	Collected questionnaires (total 2011-2012)	From total (in %)	STDEV	VARIATION
Germany	1134	24.32	354	26.62	1.62	2.63
Italy	602	12.91	211	15.86	2.09	4.36
Brazil	590	12.66	116	8.72	2.78	7.74
Spain	443	9.50	157	11.80	1.63	2.65
Australia	413	8.86	112	8.42	0.31	0.10
Others	326	6.99	82	6.17	0.58	0.34
The Netherlands	232	4.98	55	4.14	0.59	0.35
The United Kingdom	226	4.85	48	3.61	0.88	0.77
Argentina	195	4.18	39	2.93	0.88	0.78
USA	134	2.87	45	3.38	0.36	0.13
Portugal	133	2.85	52	3.91	0.75	0.56
Belgium	121	2.60	31	2.26	0.24	0.06
Switzerland	113	2.42	31	2.18	0.17	0.03
Total	**4662**		**1330**			

Source: author's construction based on the research data

All the guests were asked two questions regarding information about the tour. The first, "Did the information provided by your travel agent before the tour correspond to the service received during the tour?" and the second, "Did the tour program in your travel agent's catalogue/web site (where the tour

was booked) correspond to the program received?" These were used as introductory questions in the selected inbound operator's quality questionnaire. Other questions asked within the same questionnaire were dedicated to quality evolution of the tour, where the guests had participated. All the guests were asked to name their country of origin where the tour had been purchased. Guests were also asked to indicate their gender, however, it turned out that most couples filled out only one questionnaire; therefore, it was decided during the questionnaire evaluation process to consider this as one respondent and not to consider the gender. Besides, as the primary aim of the research was to analyze cultural differences and their reflection in tourism to be able to draw conclusions concerning tourism organization's (in this case, inbound tour operator's) management, gender information was not considered to be crucial. As the questions asking to asses correspondence of the received services to what had been promised can be considered as outcome of intercultural communication between different cultures, in this case – the inbound tour operator based in Latvia and the end customers, purchasing the guaranteed departure tours from agents in 12 different countries, certain comparisons and analysis can be carried out. For this reason, Hofstede cultural dimensions have been taken as basis to draw conclusions and give assessment on interaction between different cultures, in particular – what level of information about the tour and its details has reached the end customers and what correlations can be drawn, considering representation of different cultures.

Table 2

Hofstede Dimension Scores of the Selected Countries

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
Germany	35	67	66	65	31
Italy	50	76	70	75	34
Brazil	69	38	49	76	65
Spain	57	51	42	86	19
Australia	36	90	61	51	31
The Netherlands	38	80	14	53	44
The United Kingdom	35	89	66	35	25
Argentina	49	46	56	86	N/A
USA	40	91	62	46	29
Portugal	63	27	31	104	30
Belgium	65	75	54	94	38
Switzerland	34	68	70	58	40

PDI – power distance; IDV – individualism/collectivism dimension; MAS – masculinity/femininity dimension; UAI – uncertainty avoidance; LTO – long term orientation
Source: author's construction based on Hofstede cultural dimensions score (available on http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html)

Considering the character of all the dimensions, only 3 were subjected for further analysis – individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and long term orientation, as these were comparable to the objectives of the research.

Results of the quantitative survey have been summarized. The average score provided by respondents to each of the two questions, according to Likert scale was between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest), where 1 would mean that the information provided by travel agents before the tour did not correspond at all to the services received during the tour, which would mean that communication between the inbound tour operator and the travel agencies selling the product to end customers had been completely unsuccessful; while 5 would mean that the information provided corresponded completely and the communication

could be evaluated as successful. Similar interpretation of results was applied also to the other question, where 1 meant that the provided program did not correspond and that allowed to assume that the program had been adjusted for sales and marketing purposes using wrong interpretation resulting in discrepancies. Summary of results is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Average Evaluation of the Respondents' Answers

Country	Average question 1	Country	Average question 2
Argentina	3.17	Italy	3.73
Italy	3.68	Argentina	3.80
Germany	3.87	Belgium	3.82
Average	3.75	**Average**	3.92
Australia	4.02	Switzerland	4.04
Spain	4.02	The Netherlands	4.07
The Netherlands	4.06	Germany	4.07
Belgium	4.07	Spain	4.11
USA	4.15	USA	4.15
The United Kingdom	4.25	Australia	4.15
Portugal	4.35	The United Kingdom	4.25
Brazil	4.35	Portugal	4.29
Switzerland	4.42	Brazil	4.52

Source: author's construction based on research data

Although, the received results as well as the average score of answers to both questions were similar, it still gave us certain possibilities to make certain conclusions. Looking from the perspective of cultural dimensions, the results showed that countries with high score of individualism (Australia, the United Kingdom and USA), on the average, had comparably high score of information correspondence and very high information correspondence. At the same time, countries with low score of individualism (Brazil, Portugal and Spain) were also similar in their evaluation, although, Spain, to some extent, differed from other countries. Special attention should be paid to Argentina, which, seeming similar to countries like Spain, Portugal and Brazil, in the answers to both questions demonstrated remarkable differences. Portugal and Brazil, both being low individualism score countries demonstrated high overall level. Even though, Germany and Switzerland had similar score of individualism and could be considered similar, the answers to the first question indicated remarkable differences, as the Swiss customers had given the highest points when answering the question on information correspondence to the received services. This made us conclude that Swiss companies had closer communication to their clients, assuring that all information was well explained.

Analysing uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension score it appeared, that countries with highest uncertainty avoidance score like Portugal and Belgium demonstrated different average scores of answers to both questions – as in both cases, the provided information had been evaluated relatively highly, while the program correspondence had been evaluated in different ways – high average score given by Portugal and below the average – by Belgium. Countries with generally lower uncertainty avoidance gave higher scores to both questions, allowing us to conclude that in communication with countries with lower uncertainty avoidance the risks connected with proper information transfer are minimal. Guests originating from the United Kingdom and USA represented low uncertainty avoidance score which could

be interpreted as readiness to accept and experience previously unknown things and the average scores given by them to both questions were among the highest.

Summarizing, it has turned out that the highest score to the delivered information was given by the guests originating from countries with low individualism score, high uncertainty avoidance score and low long term orientation score. It can be associated with the fact, that the guests originating from these countries have high impact on the group information availability (their decision to purchase a travel is affected by other travellers, who have already experienced the selected destination or product type), they tend to understand all the specific details of the program and are more open to new experiences. On the other hand, the lowest score to both questions was provided by guests originating from countries with moderately high individualism score, moderately high uncertainty avoidance score and comparably low long term orientation score.

From the perspective of countries and summarizing the results, it can be concluded that countries with high score of individualism cultural dimension have evaluated higher information correspondence to reality, allowing to conclude that they pay more attention to details and avoid unexpected surprises during the tour, as they rely more on the received information, based on their own questions and communication with their travel agents. There are minor differences between the United Kingdom and USA which are countries with similar cultural dimension score, which is not the case with Brazil and Portugal, which, being similar on the average, when giving evaluations, demonstrated certain differences in cultural dimension scores. Switzerland and Germany demonstrated discussable results, as being similar – moderately high individualism cultural dimension score countries, they demonstrated rather different results when assessing the information provided by travel agents. The highest score was given by Switzerland and slightly below the average by Germany. At the same time, the program correspondence was rated less positively by Swiss respondents, while Germans improved their average evaluation score.

The results also indicate the importance to consider other factors when integrating intercultural communication into management of a tourism organization. It is obvious, that such factors as organization's human resources, communication and interaction skills play a certain role in information distribution between tourism product Producer Company and the end customers of tourism products. At the same time, it shows certain principles of clustering different cultures. This knowledge can be used to improve organization's communication during product distribution.

Finally, the data of respondents from countries with the highest number of questionnaires received have been correlated to all Hofstede cultural dimensions in order to identify the presence of further research options. The results have been summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation between 5 Hofstede Cultural Dimensions and Highest Representation Countries

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
Germany	35	67	66	65	31
Italy	50	76	70	75	34
Brazil	69	38	49	76	65
Spain	57	51	42	86	19
Australia	36	90	61	51	31
CORREL Q1	0.599	-0.654	-0.720	-0.009	0.652
CORREL Q2	0.477	-0.616	-0.639	-0.009	0.648

PDI – power distance; IDV – individualism/collectivism dimension; MAS – masculinity/femininity dimension; UAI – uncertainty avoidance; LTO – long term orientation
Source: author's construction based on Hofstede cultural dimensions score (available on http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html) and research data.

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This correlation demonstrated different results from what had been previously considered to be the right approach to analysing the issue as they demonstrated clearly that cultural dimensions with the highest correlation were power distance and long-term orientation. This meant that the end customers originating from countries with higher power distance were more relying on information provided by their travel agents and expressed higher commitment to organized group tours, than those with lower power distance cultural dimension score. Correlation showed also comparably strong correlation between the average answer to both questions and the long term orientation cultural dimension, stating that countries with higher score of long term orientation tended to evaluate higher correspondence of information and program to what had been promised when purchasing the services. This allows concluding that guests originating from these markets most probably arrive better prepared in terms of gathering information and checking details prior to the tour.

Conclusions, Proposals, Recommendations

First of all, even partly considering the experimental character of this research, it can be concluded that certain elements of tourism business organization management can be explained and observed using the existing intercultural communication models and that there is variety of approaches to that. On the other hand, comprehensive analysis and comparison of different cultures and their impact on certain cultural aspects, requires relatively high number of respondents to assure the presence of comparable data. There is also one major limitation. Making analysis of intercultural communication, taking an organization in Latvia, one comes across the major obstacle – Latvia has not been analyzed within the frame of Hofstede cultural dimensions model. Although, an alternative model – GLOBE (Javadin, Dorfman, de Luque, J.House, 2006; Koopman, Hartog, Konrad et.all, 1999), identifies cultural dimension scores in Latvia, it is important to note that the main purpose of the GLOBE model is to concentrate on leadership and cultural differences of leadership, paying less attention to cultural differences of societies or certain social groups. At the same time, considering that any type of cultural interaction needs to be examined from the perspective of interaction between at least two cultures, the achieved results should be explored considering the country where the inbound operator is located and from where the intercultural communication originates.

This particular research demonstrates that countries, when it comes to analysing the impact of culture in specific aspects of operation or management, cannot be grouped and observed, based on their geographical location. Although, there are certain similarities for countries from the same region, cultures differ in various, more complex aspects. Understanding the tourism product related information perception by end customers with different cultural backgrounds can facilitate tour operator's communication with its clients, thus, rising efficiency of communication. Clear understanding of the existing customers and markets may also facilitate understanding of new but similar markets and help to analyse their cultural profiles using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Performed correlation between Hofstede dimension scores and information correspondence and program correspondence indicated on correlation between power distance dimension and long term orientation dimension. Correlation results between long term dimension scores and evaluation scores confirm author's presumption of interaction between cultural dimensions and perception of information. Thus, for cultures with lower long term orientation score tourism organizations should devote more attention to ways and forms information about their products and services is provided.

Besides, the results and the possible discrepancies when analysing the results, serve as indicators of further researches in this field which should be continued assuring higher number of respondents

from different counties. At the same time, considering that this research has been carried out to identify the possibilities of applying the observed cultural dimensions, the results are found to be satisfactory. It can be concluded that a tourism business organization's product development and promotion would be more successful after integrating the core principles of cultural differences into its marketing and sales strategies. Besides, proper delivery of information and substantial perception of information is directly linked to the overall customer satisfaction, thus, raising the operational success and, eventually, the profitability of the company.

At the same time lack of direct similarities between answers provided by similar cultures (considering similarities of Hofstede dimensions), emphasized need to consider communication between travel agency and clients where product has been purchased, as the way tourists have been treated at their agencies may have direct impact on answers provided at the destination.

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