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**TOURISM DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS:  
The case study of Zlín region (The Czech Republic)**

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**DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP**

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the Dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree of qualification of this or any other University or institute of learning.

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to identify fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region from different stakeholders` view. The destination competitiveness of Zlín region is assessed based on an appropriate theoretical framework resulting from a comprehensive literature review. This paper employs the “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*” proposed by Dwyer and Kim due to its “*soft*” indicators. Attention is focused on Endowed and Created resources. The data are collected from local people and experts in positions related to tourism in Zlín region by using semi-structured interviews.

Results of the dissertation show that Zlín region is competitive in endowed resources, but it is not very competitive in created resources. The nature, architecture, traditions and pleasant environment are perceived as strong competitive factors. On the other hand, tourism infrastructure, shopping and entertainment are perceived as the lowest competitive factors in the region. There are found differences in the level of awareness between local people and experts and in the perception towards several factors, such as a level of entertainment.

The researcher believes that this study can make contributions from the practical (provides a set of possible driving forces that could bring higher tourist attention to the Zlín region) as well as the academic (offers new insight into the competitiveness of tourism destination based on the novel research context of Zlín) point of view.

**Keywords:** Tourism industry, tourism destination, tourism destination competitiveness, competitiveness models, competitiveness indicators, stakeholders, Zlín region

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the research

Tourism is an important and fast growing industry around the world. It created almost 266 million jobs worldwide and contributed 9.5 % to the global GDP in 2013 (WTTC, 2014). More than one billion people travelled worldwide in the year 2013 and this trend is very likely to continue growing as well as its importance to economic development and creation of jobs (UNWTO, 2014a). This trend is also driven by globalisation which has led to the emergence of new destinations (Gomezelj, 2011).

A tourism destination can be defined as *"a geographical region, political jurisdiction, or major attraction, which seeks to provide visitors with a range of satisfying to memorable visitation experiences"* (Ritchie & Bornhorst, 2010, p. 572). It is also *"complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products, and services"* (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth & Aarstad, 2011, p. 268). Mainly due to the increasing globalisation, destinations all around the world are becoming more competitive (Enright & Newton, 2005). For that reason, it is very crucial to find strengths and weaknesses of destination competitiveness and gain competitive advantage to be able to succeed (Haugland et al., 2011; Enright & Newton, 2005).

Competitiveness is an important factor that influences tourism destinations' performance in today's competitive global markets. Industry competitiveness has been largely discussed topic among researches since Michael Porter's work (Enright & Newton, 2005). Further, destination competitiveness is attracting the attention of researchers over the last years (see particularly Crouch & Ritchie 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Hassan, 2000; Heath, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004).

Several factors have been identified by researchers as drivers of achieving destination competitiveness. To name just a few, resources, infrastructure, economic condition and political stability in a country affect the success of a tourism destination (Ivanov & Webster, 2013). They influence the choice of tourists to visit and stay in particular destination (Ivanov & Webster, 2013). However, it has been noticed that visitors mostly come to the country to see well-known attractions and due to this, a large number of regional towns and villages are unfamiliar to the world despite their large tourism potential (Clarke, Denman, Hickman & Slovak, 2001).

## 1.2 Research problem

The Czech Republic is successfully developing its position as a tourism destination with 7.3 million foreign tourists in 2013, which has a 2% increase compared to the last year (CzechTourism, 2014; CTK, 2014). Johnson (1995) already points out how tourism has played big part in country's orientation towards developed western European countries after the communist regime. Tourism industry created jobs for more than 230 thousand people in the 2012 that means 4.6 % of overall Czech employment (TTG, 2014).

Administrative divisions of the Czech Republic consist of 14 regions and the capital city Prague with 65.1 % of international guests in 2013 is the main tourist attraction due to its rich architecture. Most of the other regions are not so significantly popular among foreign tourists (CTK, 2014; BBC, 2014; CIA, 2014). One of these regions, Zlín region, attracted only 1.1 % of foreign tourists in 2013, despite the fact that it can offer many natural, historical and cultural monuments (CTK,2014; Jeneralova, 2011). However, in the last year, Zlín region registered the biggest increase in the visiting by foreign tourists from all Czech Republic's 14 regions and together with the rise of "*new-aged tourists*" trend (see Table 2), there can be seen some potential to develop itself as an international tourism destination (CTK, 2014). There is a need to convince visitors to recognize other interesting parts of Bohemia and Moravia during their journeys and not only visiting Prague (Johnson, 1995). However, not many studies have been conducted towards tourism in a particular region (Sharpley, 2014).

As the researcher sees a gap in the literature and potential of Zlín region to develop itself as an international tourism destination, this work focuses on identifying the fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region from the different perspectives of its stakeholders. As Gomezelj (2011) notices the most common methods used by researchers in tourism studies are from visitors' perspective. However, due to the limitation in visiting time and so that lack of familiarity with the place, visitors sometimes cannot provide depth insight into the attractiveness of destination and understanding of some components which influence tourism in particular region (Gomezelj, 2011; Enright & Newton, 2005). For this reason, as well as the fact that Zlin region is not well recognized among foreigners and to gain visitors' perspective would be hard to achieved, author has decided to concentrate its work on perception of local people as well as people in managing positions related to tourism in Zlín region.

This study can make contributions from the practical as well as the academic point of view. From the practical point of view, it can provide a set of possible driving forces that could bring higher tourist attention to the Zlín region. From the academic point of view, it can offer new insight into the competitiveness of tourism destination based on the novel research context of Zlín. There is a lack of attention towards competitiveness of certain regions, particularly in the Czech Republic, in the previous studies.

### **1.3 Research question**

Based on the research problem the main research question has been defined as:

**How can the competitiveness of Zlin region as an international tourist destination be assessed?**

\* the destination competitiveness of Zlin region is going to be assessed based on an appropriate theoretical framework resulting from a comprehensive literature review. For the purpose of this dissertation the competitiveness of the region was assessed through the stakeholders, such as local people and experts in positions related to tourism in Zlín region.

### **1.4 The aim and research objectives**

The aim of this dissertation is to identify fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlin region from different stakeholders` view.

The main research objectives are:

- to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlín region
- to investigate how different stakeholders perceive various aspects of Zlín region as an international tourist destination
- to provide recommendation that can help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination

### **1.5 Structure of the research**

This research consists of seven chapters.

**Chapter 1 – Introduction:**

This chapter introduces the background to the research and the research problem. It defines the research question, aim and objectives of this study and it also show what contribution the study can make.

### **Chapter 2 – Literature review**

Critical review of the literature relevant to the research topic is provided in this chapter. The attention is paid to the issue of tourism industry and its trends; international competitiveness; theory of destination competitiveness; models of destination competitiveness and its indicators and stakeholders in tourism industry. The theoretical framework for the purpose of this thesis is chosen as a result of this comprehensive literature review.

### **Chapter 3 – Research Methodology**

This chapter illustrates the research design of this study and methods of collecting primary data. It presents the sample size, ethical consideration and limitation of this thesis.

### **Chapter 4 – The case study of Zlín region**

Brief introduction of Zlín region prior the data analysis and research findings are presented mainly for a better understanding of the investigated area.

### **Chapter 5 – Research findings, analysis and discussion**

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a deep analysis of data collected through the interview process. It provides findings of the research and a discussion by referring back to the literature.

### **Chapter 6 – Recommendation**

In this chapter, the researcher makes an effort to provide recommendation that could help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination based on outcomes of interviews.

### **Chapter 7 – Conclusion**

This chapter provides a brief summary of the whole dissertation, its aim, research objectives and findings. It also suggests recommendation for a future research.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide critical review of the literature relevant to the research topic in order to collect secondary data to gain theoretical knowledge about certain areas of this study. This will also help to set an appropriate theoretical framework for assessing the destination competitiveness of Zlín region.

Firstly, the researcher considers important to define the tourism industry and its trends due to the fact that any destination needs to respond to these trends in order to achieve competitiveness. After that the literature review on international competitiveness of economics and business will be analysed as an important basis for creating any model of destination competitiveness. Then, this chapter will move on to the theory, models and indicators of destination competitiveness in the tourism industry. Several models and indicators from different authors will be introduced in order to provide deep understanding of the issue of destination competitiveness. The appropriate theoretical framework for assessing the destination competitiveness of Zlín region will be chosen as a result of this comprehensive literature review.

Furthermore, one of the sections in this chapter will provide literature review on the issue of stakeholders in tourism industry because this thesis tries to assess the competitiveness of Zlín region as an international tourist destination through the perception of its stakeholders.

### 2.1 Tourism industry and its trends

Tourism is a *“social phenomenon manifested in the increasing mobility of people locally, nationally and internationally for a variety of purposes”* (Sharpley, 2009, p. 11). Cooper et al. (2008, p. 11) define tourism as *“whole range of individuals, businesses, organisations and places which combine in some way to deliver a travel experience.”* It is an industry that comprises of numerous products and industries as it can be seen in Table 1 (Swain & Mishra, 2012, p. 4). All these elements are important for developing tourism destination. For instance Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000) identify infrastructure as an important factor affecting visitor experience.

Products	Industries
1. Accommodation services for visitors	1. Accommodation for visitors
2. Food and beverage serving services	2. Food and beverage serving activities
3. Railway passenger transport services	3. Railway passenger transport
4. Road passenger transport services	4. Road passenger transport
5. Water passenger transport services	5. Water passenger transport
6. Air passenger transport services	6. Air passenger transport
7. Transport equipment rental services	7. Transport equipment rental
8. Travel agencies and other reservation services	8. Travel agencies and other reservation services activities
9. Cultural services	9. Cultural activities
10. Sports and recreational services	10. Sports and recreational activities
11. Country-specific tourism characteristic goods	11. Retail trade of country-specific tourism characteristic goods
12. Country-specific tourism characteristic services	12. Other country-specific tourism characteristic activities

Source: UNWTO, 2014b

*Table 1 List of categories of tourism characteristic product and tourism industries*

Traditional tourism destinations were developing their methods in order to respond the growing demand. Nevertheless, globalization has speed up the whole process and emerges new competing regions (Phillips & Moutinho, 2014). Due to the globalisation, many new destinations arise as well as tourism trends have changed (Gomezelj, 2011; Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). Dupeyras and MacCallum (2013) point out that it is essential to acknowledge these trends to be able to compete on the international market. There are several key trends that change tourism these days. For instance, the importance of internet as a sales channel, the role of social media as a source of information influencing travel plans, young tourists as an important segment in the tourism industry or growing importance of new forms of tourism such as shopping or adventure travels (Passport, 2013; ITB, 2013).

Moreover, in this new area of tourism, tourists are becoming more attracted to non-traditional and un-known destinations rather than the typical mass ones (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). Tourists' expectations have changed as it can be seen in Table 2 (Swain & Mishra, 2012). This also brings higher competitiveness in terms of attracting tourists to the destination (Enright & Newton, 2005).

<b>Old-age tourists</b>	<b>New-age tourists</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit popular destination like beaches and hill stations</li> <li>• Follow the masses</li> <li>• Are reckless and irresponsible to the environmental and social dimension</li> <li>• Show inexperience in travelling</li> <li>• Harbour and feeling of superiority</li> <li>• Like attractions</li> <li>• Are reactive</li> <li>• Live self-created environments</li> <li>• Opt for standardized and homogeneous products</li> <li>• Prefer organized tours and are dependent on guides in a group tour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience the new and pave the way for the masses to follow</li> <li>• Want to lead, admire, and experience with a considerate and participatory attitude</li> <li>• Are informed</li> <li>• Enjoy sports, nature and adventure</li> <li>• Try to avoid the beaten track</li> <li>• Mix with local population</li> <li>• Try to experience local food while participating in fair and adopt local lifestyle and try to mingle with the local people using the locals´ own language</li> <li>• Travel in diversified interest groups, are independent and adventurous, and opt for individual exploration and experience</li> </ul>

Source: Swain & Mishra, 2012, p. 40

*Table 2 Differentiating old-age and new-age tourists*

## 2.2 International competitiveness

The concept of destination competitiveness is highly connected with the competitiveness of international economics and business (Melián-González & García-Falcón, 2003). Literature review on competitiveness of business is usually used in the process of developing suitable framework for destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Due to this fact, it is important to explain the concept of general business competitiveness before this paper moves on to the competitiveness of tourism destination.

Scott and Lodge (1985, p. 3) define competitiveness *“as a country’s ability to create, produce and distribute products and services, both domestically and internationally, while earning rising returns on its resource.”* In other words, competitiveness is about firm’s ability to produce more quality products and services than its competitors (Shafaeddin, 2012). From another point of view, the World economic forum (2013a, p. 4) explains competitiveness as *“the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country.”*

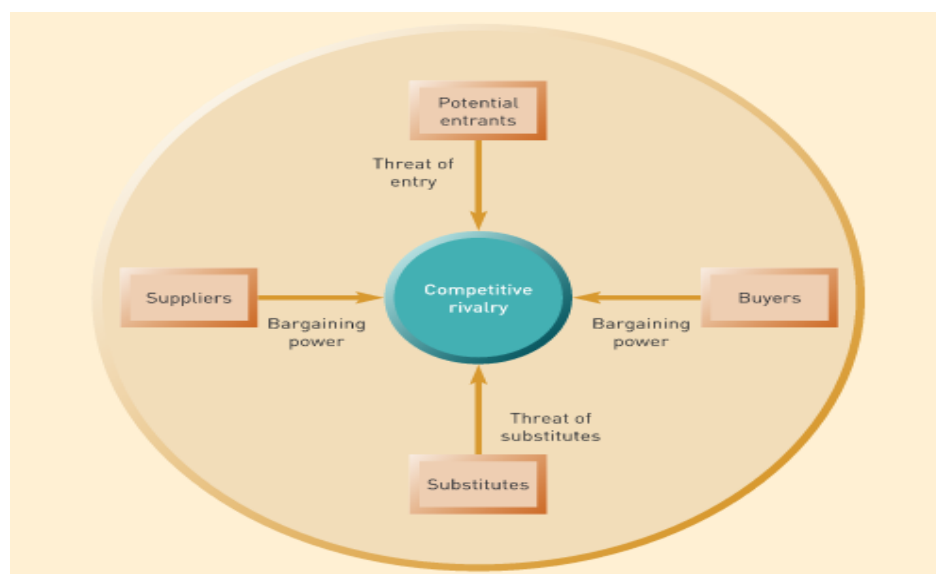
When talking about competitiveness, the literature often emphasizes the term competitive and comparative advantage. The comparative advantage is basically connected with cost and price and it is not seen as a key driver of the international competitiveness (Shafaeddin, 2012; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). On the other hand, the competitive advantage takes into consideration the importance of non-cost/non-price factors (Shafaeddin, 2012).

Trends of competitiveness have changed over the time and as Shafaeddin (2012, p.2) points out achieving competitiveness is “*a moving target.*”

The company’s competitive advantage comes from the combination of the two major factors: “*the firm’s competitive strategy and the national (macro) environment within which it operates*” (Shafaeddin, 2012, p. 50).

Competitive strategy of the firm is the structure of the industry in which the company does its business and the way how the company decides to positions itself within this structure (Shafaeddin, 2012).

The industry structure is affected by the Porter’s five competitive forces (see Figure 1), which identify the attractiveness of the industry and the potential to offer profit (Johnson, Whittington & Scholes, 2011).



Source: Johnson et al., 2011, p. 55

*Figure 1 The five forces framework*

To find the right position in the industry, a company needs to consider its generic strategy. The firm can focus on either becoming a *cost leader* in the particular industry or on the *differentiation, cost focus* or *focused differentiation* strategy (Shafaeddin, 2012, p. 50). These strategies can help company to achieve competitive advantage on a certain market (Espino-Rodríguez & Lai, 2014).

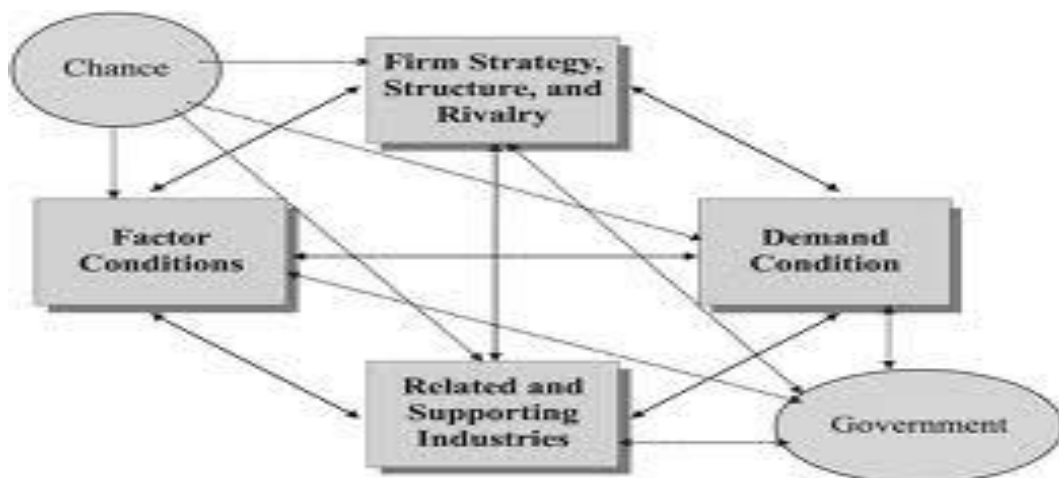


		<i>Competitive advantage</i>	
		Lower cost	Differentiation
<i>Scope</i>	Broad target	Cost leadership	Differentiation
	Narrow target	Cost focus	Focused differentiation (specialized)

Source: Shafaeddin, 2012, p. 52

*Figure 2 Porter’s generic strategy*

On the national level, Porter (1990) develops framework called “*Porter’s diamond model.*” This model involves four components “*factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and strategy, structure, and rivalry of the firms located at the destination*” (Molina-Azorín & Claver-Cortés, 2007, p. 729). In Porter’s (1998, p. 127) later study an additional two external variables were added “*chance and government.*” Porter’s diamond model allows description of factors that are important for identifying the competitive success of an organisation in a certain country (Enright & Newton, 2005). This model is often used as a basis for analysis of destination competitiveness (Molina-Azorín & Claver-Cortés, 2007). Therefore, it is essential to explain it further in more details from the view of Porter as well as other researchers of competitiveness.



Source: Porter, 1998, p. 127

*Figure 3 Porter’s Diamond model (1998)*

*Factor condition:* factors such as natural resources, machinery, infrastructure, qualified workers and others are important for competing in particular industry (Dlamini, Kirsten & Masuku, 2014). It consists of *basic factors* (for instance, natural resources, location, and/or climate) and *advanced factors*, which includes, for example, infrastructure (Grant, 1991). Advanced factors are those that are crucial for achieving competitive advantage.

*Demand conditions:* industry needs to create demand for its goods and services among domestic and international consumers (Dlamini et al., 2014). It is vital to understand the environment of the company and the needs of their customers (Grant, 1991).

*Related and supporting industries:* these include industries that are related to company's competitiveness. It can be telecommunication, electricity or research institutions (Dlamini et al., 2014). The cooperation between these industries can be beneficial in order to share information that might be related to the development of new technology, innovation etc. (Jin & Moon 2006).

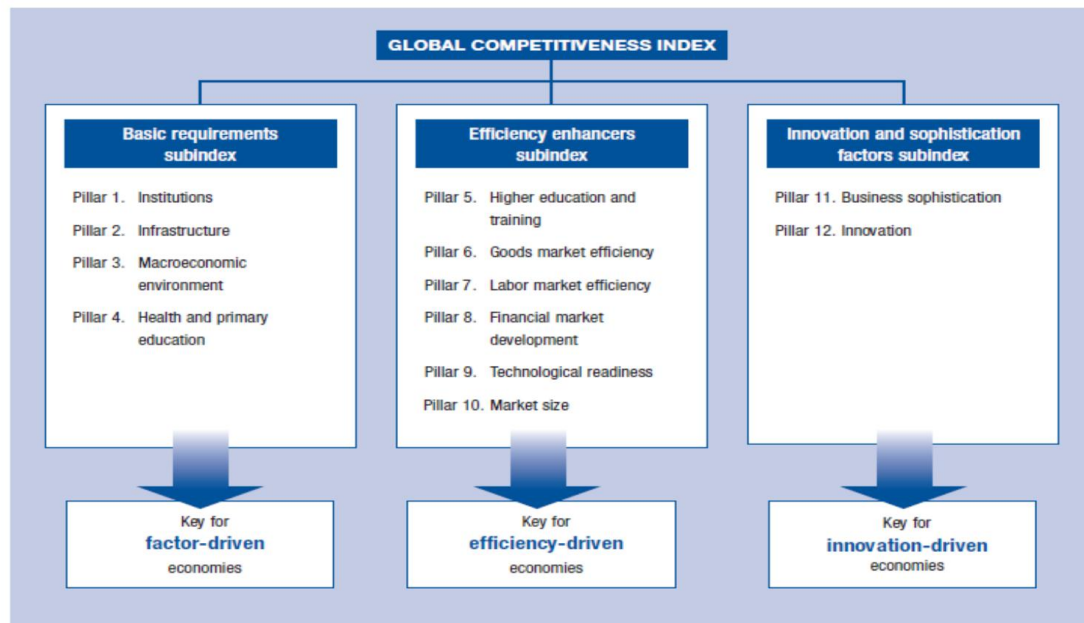
*Firm strategy, structure and rivalry* refers to “*the conditions in the nation governing how companies are created, organized, and managed, as well as the nature of domestic rivalry*” (Porter, 1998, p. 107).

*Chance conditions* are related to the situations in the country which are beyond the power of the company to be influenced such as crime, illnesses, exchange rate or the political environment (Dlamini et al., 2014).

*Role of government:* government can play an important part in effecting the five conditions shown above either in a positive or negative way. This can be done through for instance taxes, regulations etc. (Dlamini et al., 2014).

All these determinants should operate interdependently for the best result in achieving competitive advantage (Grant, 1991).

According to the World Economic Forum (2013a), understanding factors that are responsible for determining competitiveness have been under the attention of several economists for hundreds of years. Since the Porter's work, a few models and factors that define competitiveness have been developed. In addition, the World economic forum defines a framework of twelve pillars important for measuring various aspects of nation's competitiveness (WEF, 2013a).



Source: WEF, 2013a, p. 9

*Figure 4 The global competitiveness index framework*

In the tourism industry, comparative advantage is connected with resources that already exist in the destination (Bordas, 1994). Competitive advantage is created and it provides added value in competing on the market against its competitors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). This can be achieved by improving quality and attractiveness of some products or services (e.g. attractive festivals, improving infrastructure), innovation, new marketing activities, improvement in technology etc. (Bordas, 1994). Both of these advantages are crucial for developing a model of destination competitiveness in the tourism industry (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

### **2.3 Theory of destination competitiveness**

Tourism destination competitiveness has been subject of interest of many researchers over the last years (see particularly Crouch & Ritchie 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Hassan, 2000; Heath, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004). Destinations compete against each other more than they did in the past (Crouch, 2011). The growing movement of tourists means that many new tourism destinations are emerging and owing to that, places compete not only locally but also on the global scale (Crouch, 2011).

Destination competitiveness is *“the ability of the place to optimise its attractiveness for residents and non-residents, to deliver quality, innovative, and attractive tourism services to consumers”* (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013, p. 7). Gomezelj and Mihalič (2008, p. 295)

states “*it is a country’s ability to create added value.*” It helps enhance living standards and income of its residents and it can bring success in the international market (Kompula, 2014; Enright & Newton, 2004).

It is important for towns, cities, regions and countries to comprehend their strengths and weaknesses in their competitive environment and become different from one another (Baker & Cameron, 2008). Hallak, Assaker, O’Connor and Vinzi, (2014) claim that it is necessary to understand factors which are the main drivers of destination competitiveness.

For instance Gomezelj (2011) finds out that several parts which influence tourism in Slovenia, such as the quality of services, creation of new tourism products and development of human resources as well as education have been neglected. Inconvenient environment for foreign investment, lack of management in the development and marketing of tourism products were determined as the weak point of the Slovenian tourism industry (Gomezelj, 2011).

The competitiveness of tourism destination depends on its attractiveness and strength of its resources as well as its ability to manage and combine these resources (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). Tourism competitiveness is not only based on one aspect of the tourism product but rather on the successful integration between the different tourism facilities (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). Enright and Newton (2004) underline that even though countries like Cuba offer sun and sea, these attributes only secure a basis for tourism competitiveness. Factors such as infrastructure or human resources are those which provide growth in the level of competitiveness (Enright & Newton, 2004). To be able to achieve competitive advantage, destination has to make sure that its attractiveness is higher and the experiences of tourists are more quality one than those that other destinations provide to their customers (Dwyer et al., 2004). Tourists usually perceive destination as a one unit, however number of individual actors are connected with different components that bring together a product which satisfy tourists’ needs as a whole (Haugland et al., 2011). All components of tourism system need to be communicated and managed efficiently (Ritchie & Bornhorst, 2010). Haugland et al. (2011) also point out that cooperation between different regions in the country is beneficial in terms of exchanging information and knowledge.

Considering the fact that flow of tourists is related to the competitiveness of a destination, it is useful to develop a model and indicators related to this issue (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

## 2.4 Models of destination competitiveness

In the 1990s tourism researchers have started to think about the way how destination competitiveness could be measured (Crouch, 2011). Fundamental differences can be found between products offered on the tourism market and goods and services provided on the “traditional” market. Due to this it seemed to be essential to develop a model which focuses on the competitiveness of the tourism sector (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Model of destination competitiveness sets number of indicators which should investigate the strength and weaknesses of any tourism destination (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). In the past years, number of researchers has developed several models which focus on the issue of competitiveness from the view of the tourism sector (Crouch, 2011). Because of the extensive number of models it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide detailed description of each of them. Five major models were selected as more models can be seen in Appendix 1.

### 2.4.1 Crouch and Ritchie

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) recognize the importance of tourism as a tool for country’s economic growth. They found a gap in frameworks which would manage all aspects of tourism development (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). Interviews with tourism experts help create detailed model of tourism competitiveness based on the basis of the Porter’s diamond model (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). This model is set on the concept of comparative and competitive advantage with focus on the characteristics of destination competitiveness (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Crouch, 2011). It also recognizes the importance of the micro and macro environment surrounding the destination as the main influence to the core of its competitiveness (Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). This model proposes that competitiveness is influenced by four aspects: “*qualifying determinants; destination management; core resources and attractions; supporting factors and resources*” (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). This model is continuously developing and later on “*destination policy; planning and development*” were added to the original model (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). In total, the factors of destination competitiveness are gathered into five major groups of the model and identified by 36 destination competitiveness indicators as it can be seen in Figure 5 (Crouch, 2011). This model is probably the best-known and the most comprehensive framework which can be found in the literature. It helps a destination to strengthen its ability to compete successfully in the international market (Enright & Newton, 2005). Its brief description is provided bellow.

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) stress that *micro and macro environment* must be kept in mind when using the conceptual model of destination competitiveness. Micro and macro environment is constantly changing and it is important to follow the state of both of these factors.

### **Competitive (Micro) Environment**

Competitive (micro) environment defines the direct competitors. The micro environment includes the destination itself as well as tour packagers, suppliers, travel agents, competitive destinations or destination's stakeholders (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

### **Global (Macro) environment**

Tourism is influenced by several global forces, such as the concern about environment. To stay competitive, destination has to adapt to these issues or to overcome them (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

### **Core resources and attractors**

Core resources and attractors are "*the primary elements of destination appeal*" (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999, p. 146). These are the main reasons for visiting destination. Ritchie and Crouch (1999, p. 146) divide them into six groups "*physiography, culture and history, market ties, mix of activities, events, the tourism superstructure.*" Later *entertainment and climate* were added to the original model (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

### **Supporting factors and resources**

Supporting factors and resources give the basis on which the successful tourism destination can be created (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999, p. 149). For instance, *general infrastructure*, such as *the quality of local transportation services, potable water supply, and communication system*, is one of the most crucial elements (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999, p. 149). *Facilitating resources and services* provide inputs without which the tourism industry could not exist. These are public services, financial institution and research centres (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999, p. 149).

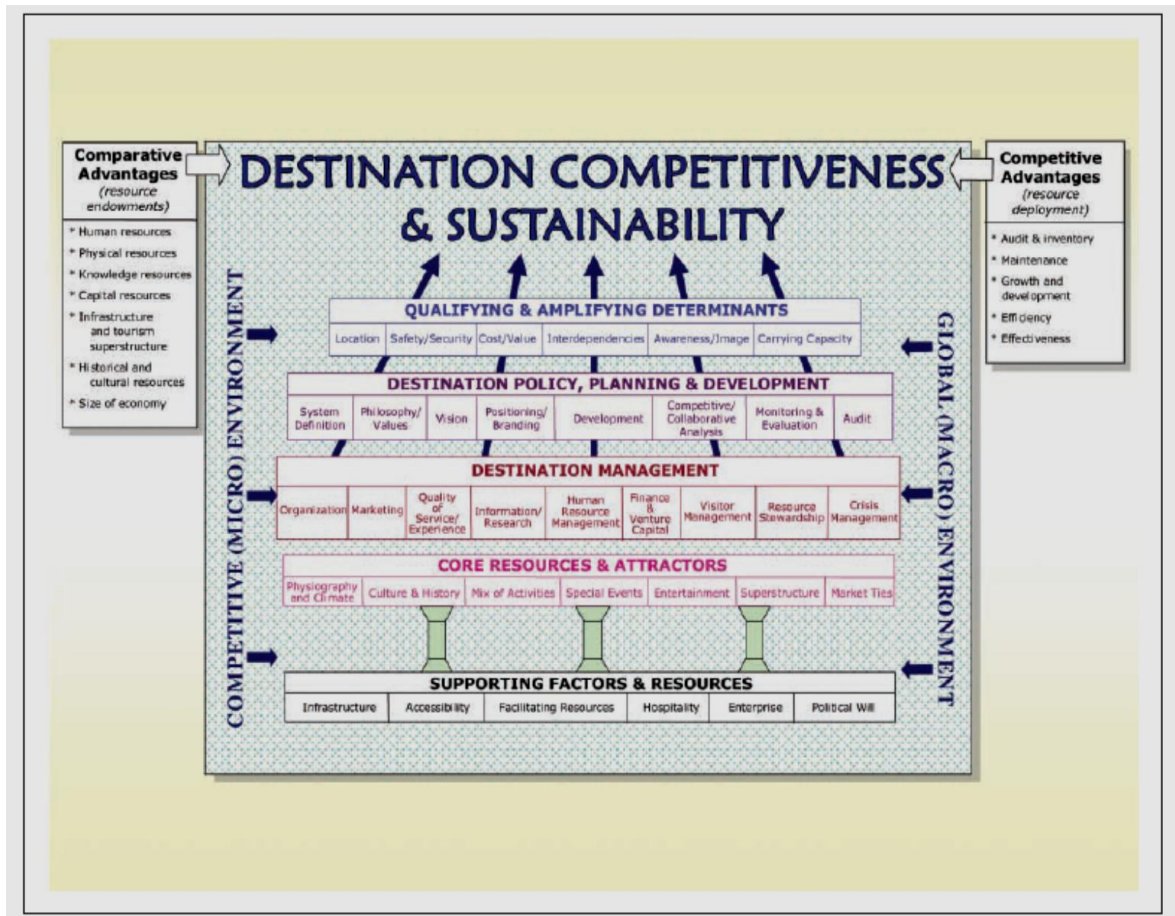
### **Destination management**

Different parts of the destination management concentrate on activities that can help the core resources and attractors enhance its appeal, to improve quality of supporting factors and so on. For instance marketing is focusing on promotion, pricing policies or product development of the destination (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999, p. 149).

### Qualifying Determinants

Qualifying determinants refer to those that have an influence on the competitiveness of the previous three groups. It can be *safety and security* or *awareness of the destination* (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

The final factor is **destination policy, planning and development** that help determine, for example, the *vision, philosophy and positioning* of a destination (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).



Source: Crouch, 2011, p. 29

Figure 5 Crouch and Ritchie conceptual model of destination competitiveness

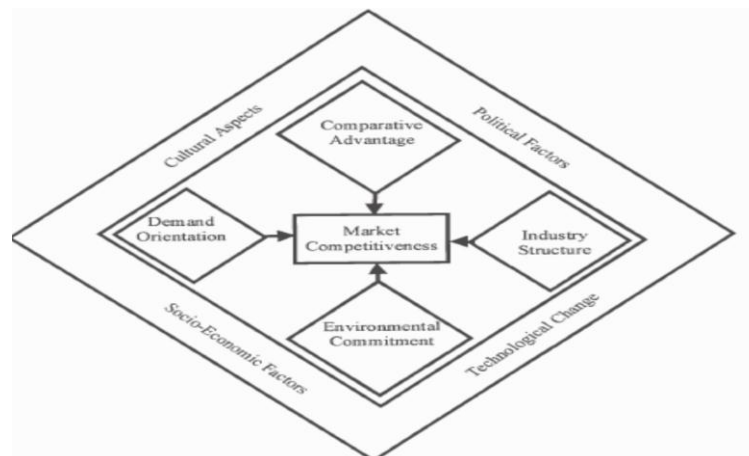
### 2.4.2 Hassan

Model of destination competitiveness was introduced in the year 2000 by the researcher Salah S. Hassan. This model concentrates on “*environmental sustainability factors*” connected with tourism destination (Hassan, 2000, p. 239). According to Hassan (2000) destinations should pay attention to its unique comparative advantage which attract specific tourism segment for a long term.

Tourism destinations include several industries from the hospitality and transportation to the entertainment. These industries provide added value to the destination competitive position. Hassan (2000, p. 242) emphasizes that if these industries are managed successfully they can bring high market growth and competitiveness to the place.

Hassan introduces four main determinants that focus on market competitiveness:

1. *Comparative advantage* that brings together factors connect with macro as well as micro environment that are important for market competitiveness
2. *Demand orientation* is the ability of destination to successfully react to the changing demand on the market
3. *Industry structure* includes industries related to the tourism which can help destination to achieve competitiveness
4. *Environmental commitment* shows that the development of destination and the reaction to its environment will influence sustainable market competitiveness (Hassan, 2000, p. 242)



Source: Hassan, 2000, p. 241

*Figure 6 Determinants of market competitiveness in an environmentally sustainable tourism industry*

### 2.4.3 Heath

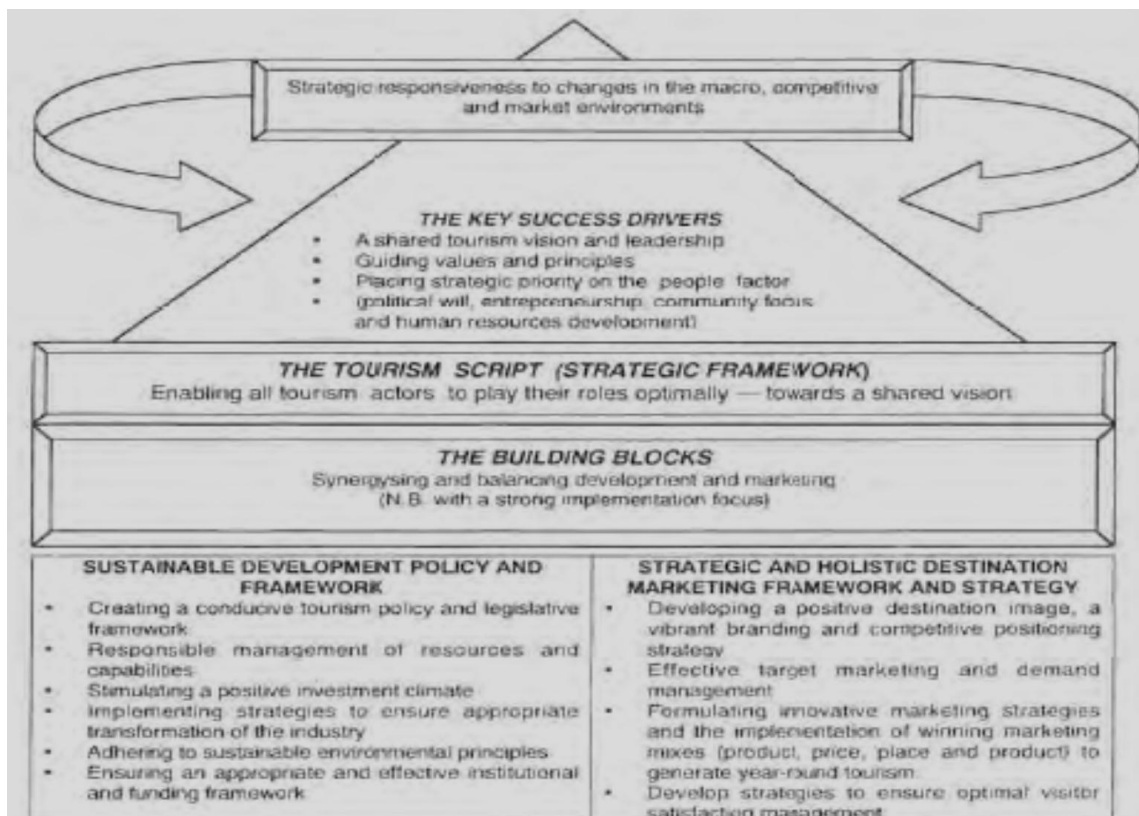
According to Heath (2003, p. 131) previous models of destination competitiveness are not entirely appropriate for the purpose of tourism in South Africa due to the fact that they did not pay much attention to the critical success drivers, such as people, and important linkages, for instance communication management.

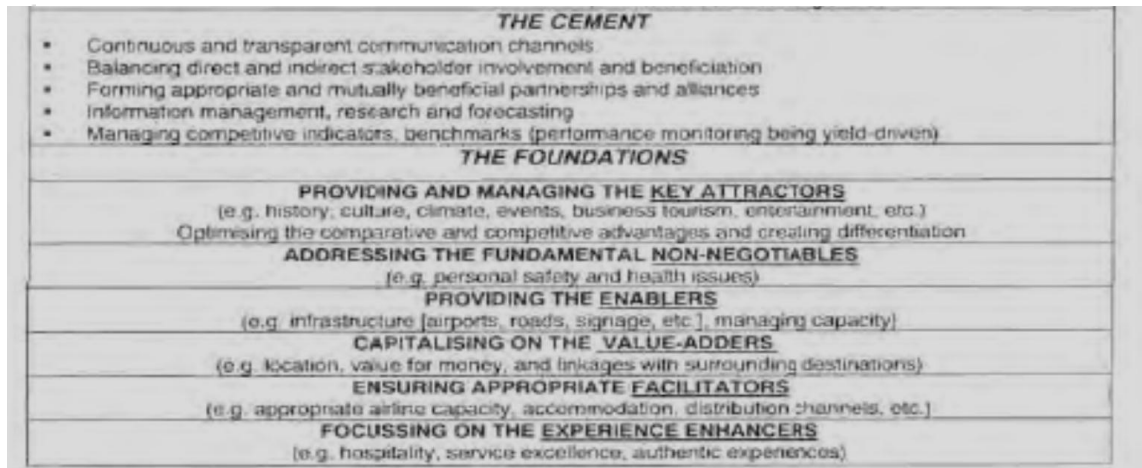


This model is designed in the shape of a house and it contains different key aspects determining destination competitiveness (Heath, 2003). *The Foundations* give a basis for competitiveness (Heath, 2003). *The cement* links together the main aspects of competitiveness without which the destination competitiveness could not be achieved (Heath, 2003). *The building blocks* include development policies and destination strategies important for “making tourism to happen” (Heath, 2003 p. 131). *The key success drivers (the roof)* involve people responsible for destination competitiveness (Heath, 2003).

In addition, “*the tourism script (strategic framework)*” outlines the role of several public and private sectors responsible for the added value of destination competitiveness (Heath, 2003, p. 135).

Each of these aspects includes several tasks as it can be seen in the following figure.



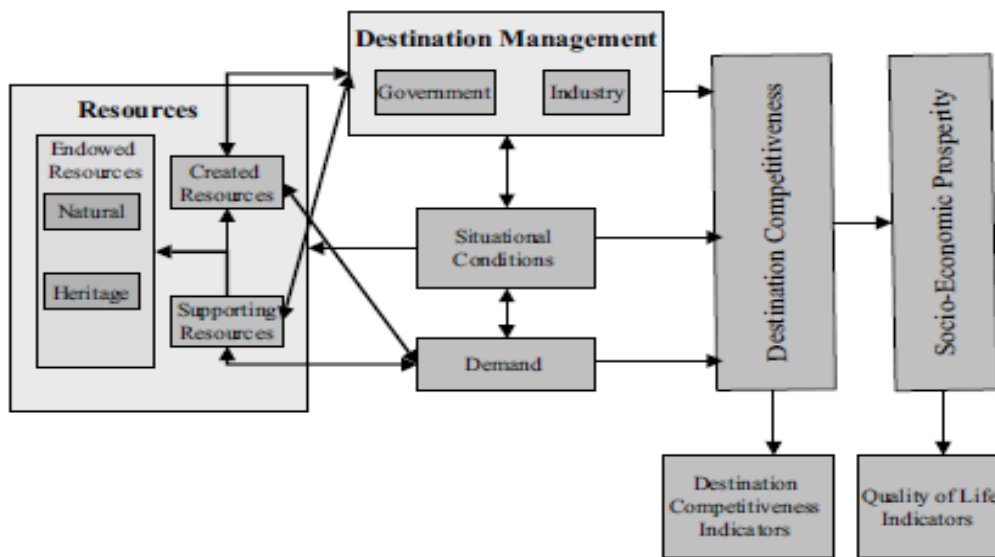


Source: Heath, 2003, p. 132

*Figure 7 Model for enhancing Southern Africa's sustainable tourism competitiveness*

#### 2.4.4 Dwyer and Kim

Dwyer and Kim (2003) develop model by taking into account components suggested in the literature on business competitiveness as well as by tourism researcher, especially by Crouch and Ritchie. Factors proposed in this model are very similar to those ones employed in the Crouch and Ritchie's model. However, some differences can be found. In particular, demand conditions are perceived as a crucial determinant of destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Due to this, the "Integrated model of destination competitiveness" has been developed and it includes "inherited resources, created resources, supporting factors and resources, destination management, situational conditions, and demand conditions" (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). This model has been tested to assess the tourism competitiveness of Korea and Australia in 2003 as well as Slovenia in 2008 and 2011 and Serbia in 2011 (Dwyer, Livaic, & Mellor, 2003; Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Gomezelj, 2011; Armenski, Marković, Davidović & Jovanović, 2011).



Source: Dwyer et al., 2004, p. 2

*Figure 8 Integrated model of destination competitiveness*

Once a framework of destination competitiveness has been developed, the next step involves developing indicators of its competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Dwyer and Kim (2003) determine indicators on the basis of the main components of the “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness.*” In the Appendix 2 can be seen the list of possible indicators used to measure the competitiveness of any destination. Nevertheless, new indicators can be added to the original list any time (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*” is able to provide framework which evaluate the destination competitiveness of a whole country as well as its regions (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

Moreover, Dwyer and Kim (2003) stress that this model can be used either as a whole comparing all determinants of the destination competitiveness or to assess competitiveness of certain groups.

#### **2.4.5 Enright and Newton**

Enright and Newton (2004, p. 778) claim that destination competitiveness is not only determined by tourism factors but also by a range of factors that affect providers of tourism services. This model defines “*37 business-related factors*” applied to create a model, which was used in Enright and Newton’s survey study for measuring competitiveness in Hong Kong (Enright & Newton, 2004, p. 777). These factors were identified by tourism experts according to their importance towards destination competitiveness (Enright & Newton, 2004).

This study applies both tourism-specific and generic indicators. It offers potential for broader evaluation of the factors that have impact on destinations ability to attract and satisfy tourists (Enright & Newton, 2004, p. 779). Mainly it has shown that business-related factors provide valuable insight into the competitiveness of destination and offer useful approach for tourism experts and policy makers (Enright & Newton, 2004).

<b>Major Drivers</b>	<b>Items Derived from Drivers of Competitiveness (Porter, 1990; Enright, Scott, and Dodwell, 1997; Enright, 2000)</b>
<b>Inputs</b>	Internal transportation facilities, Communication facilities, Staff skills, Access to information, Local managerial skills, Banking & financial system, Geographic location, Level of technology, Staff costs, Other infrastructure, Property related costs, Other costs
<b>Industrial &amp; Consumer Demand</b>	China market potential, Long haul market potential, Other Asia Pacific market potential, Local market demand
<b>Inter-firm Competition &amp; Cooperation</b>	Good firm cooperation, Tough local competition
<b>Industrial &amp; Regional Clustering</b>	Support from related industries, Presence of international firms
<b>Internal Organization &amp; Strategy of Firms</b>	Strategies of international firms, Strategies of local firms
<b>Institutions, Social Structures and Agendas</b>	Political stability, Free port status, Government policy, Cleanliness of government <sup>2</sup> , Overall economic condition, Transparency in policy making, Investment incentives, Tax regime, Education & training institutions, Regulatory framework, Strong currency, Community institutions
<b>Additional Drivers</b>	
<b>Tourism Business Superstructure</b>	International access, Good retail sector <sup>3</sup> , High quality accommodation
<b>Market Ties</b>	China market potential, Other Asia-Pacific market potential, Long haul market potential

<sup>2</sup> A term that is a widely understood euphemism in the Asia Pacific region for "lack of corruption".

<sup>3</sup> "Good Retail Sector" was considered to cover "Shopping".

Source: Enright & Newton, 2004, p. 780

*Figure 9 Generic business factors of competitiveness*

## 2.5 Indicators of destination competitiveness

The previous section introduces models of various authors as well as its established set of indicators for measuring destination competitiveness. This chapter will explore other possible measurement of destination competitiveness.

### 2.5.1 "Hard" and "soft" measures

Indicators of destination competitiveness can be measured on the basis of several categories. Dwyer and Kim (2003) propose that the destination competitiveness can be measured objectively ("*hard measures*" indicators) by for instance number of visitors market share or tourists expenses as well as it can be measured subjectively ("*soft measures*" indicators). This includes measurement of cultural or natural attractiveness and/or quality of services provided to visitors. The "soft" measures are usually connected

with the perception of visitors and its form tends to be more “qualitative” (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

### 2.5.2 World economic forum

World Economic Forum recognizes the fact that developing the travel and tourism sector brings many benefits, however there are several obstacles related with its development (WEF, 2013b). Owing to this, seven years ago the World Economic Forum has started to conduct research among countries all over the world to identify issues connected to the travel and tourism competitiveness (WEF, 2013b). The latest report focuses on the “*reducing barriers to economic growth and job creation*” issues (WEF, 2013b, p. 15). 140 countries took part in this study by classifying their competitiveness based on the “*Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI)*.” This index established 14 key indicators for measuring the destination competitiveness (WEF, 2013b). Destinations were assessed by gaining quantitative data from various public sources and tourism experts available in each country (WEF, 2013b). These are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. “ <i>Policy rules and regulations</i> ”           | 8. “ <i>Tourism infrastructure</i> ”                         |
| 2. “ <i>Environmental sustainability</i> ”           | 9. “ <i>ICT infrastructure</i> ”                             |
| 3. “ <i>Safety and security</i> ”                    | 10. “ <i>Price competitiveness in the T&amp;T industry</i> ” |
| 4. “ <i>Health and hygiene</i> ”                     | 11. “ <i>Human resources</i> ”                               |
| 5. “ <i>Prioritization of Travel &amp; Tourism</i> ” | 12. “ <i>Affinity for Travel &amp; Tourism</i> ”             |
| 6. “ <i>Air transport infrastructure</i> ”           | 13. “ <i>Natural resources</i> ”                             |
| 7. “ <i>Ground transport infrastructure</i> ”        | 14. “ <i>Cultural resources</i> ” (WEF, 2013b, p. 15)        |

### 2.5.3 OECD

“*Organisation for economic Co-operation and development*” has also published a paper to identify “*Indicators for measuring competitiveness in tourism*” (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). OECD is an organisation with 34 member countries that work together with government to achieve “*stronger, cleaner and fairer global economy*” (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013, p. 3). As the global market is changing OECD finds important to address these changes and examine tourism competitiveness in its member countries (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013).

Hence, OECD has identified three types of indicators: “*core, supplementary and future development*” (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). These indicators were used to measure competitiveness in four different categories:

- “*Indicators measuring the tourism performance and impacts*”
- “*Indicators monitoring the ability of a destination to deliver quality and competitive tourism services*”
- “*Indicators monitoring the attractiveness of a destination*”
- “*Indicators describing policy responses and economic opportunities*” (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013, p. 7.)

<b>Core indicators</b>	
Tourism performance and impacts	1 <i>Tourism Direct Gross Domestic Product</i> A leading international measure of the tourism contribution to GDP
	2 <i>Inbound tourism revenues per visitor by source market</i> A measure of the economic activity of visitors
	3 <i>Overnights in all types of accommodation</i> A measure of tourism flows in accommodation
	4 <i>Exports of tourism services</i> A measure showing the contribution of tourism to exports
Ability of a destination to deliver quality and competitive tourism services	5. <i>Labour productivity in tourism services</i> A measure providing evidence of the productive potential of the tourism economy
	6. <i>Purchasing Power Parity (PPPs) and tourism prices</i> A measure showing tourism price competitiveness using PPPs
	7. <i>Country entry visa requirements</i> A measure of entry visa requirements including methods of visa issuance
Attractiveness of a destination	8. <i>Natural resources and biodiversity</i> A measure of a country's stock of natural assets
	9. <i>Cultural and creative resources</i> A measure of a country's cultural and creative attractions, activities and events
	10. <i>Visitor satisfaction</i> A measure of demand side attractiveness value, based on current and future competitiveness
Policy responses and economic opportunities	11. <i>National Tourism Action Plan</i> A measure indicating effectiveness in assisting to improve the competitiveness of tourism
<b>Supplementary Indicators</b>	
Tourism performance and impacts	<i>Market diversification and growth markets</i> A measure to capture the broad basis of performance in several source markets. Countries with a wide range of source markets and a focus on growth markets would receive higher scores than countries with a narrow market dependency focus
Ability of a destination to deliver quality and competitive tourism services	<i>Employment in tourism by age, education levels and type of contracts</i> A measure that would assess ability to attract, retain and develop talent in the industry to enable improved competitiveness
	<i>Consumer Price Index for tourism</i> A complementary measure to others such as PPPs
	<i>Air connectivity and inter-modality</i> A measure of competitiveness revealed in air routes, flight time from main markets and passenger numbers
Attractiveness of a destination	<i>OECD Better Life Index</i> A measure using a tourism focused version of the index
<b>Future Development Indicators</b>	
Ability of a destination to deliver quality and competitive tourism	<i>Government budget appropriations for tourism</i> A measure of national government tourism expenditure per capita
	<i>Company mortality rate</i> A measure of the enterprise activity and business churn
Policy responses and economic opportunities	<i>Use of e-tourism and other innovative services</i> An Index measure on innovation and use of social media in the tourism industry
	<i>Structure of tourism supply chains</i> An Index measure of industry thickness, clusters and competitiveness, existing/potential

Source: Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013, p. 17

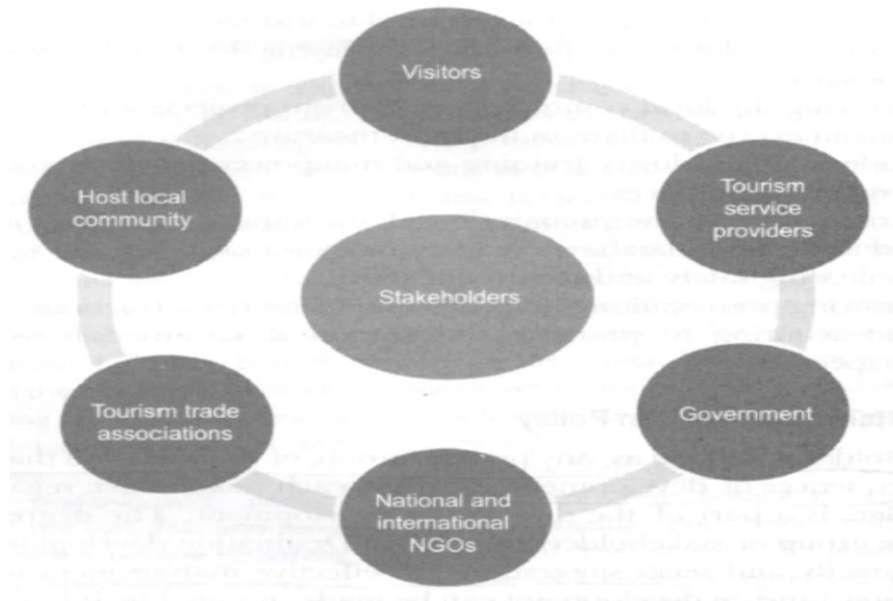
Figure 10 List of Core, Supplementary and Future Development Indicators

## 2.6 Stakeholders in tourism industry

Tourism industry comprises of several stakeholders that play an important role in destination competitiveness. As it was mentioned earlier, tourism is an important tool for economic development (UNWTO, 2014a). However, tourism development must be managed in sustainable way so the community is not disrupted by its effect (Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009). That is why it is important to include stakeholders into the tourism development. Developing successful tourism in an area becomes very difficult without the support of its stakeholder, particularly its community (Byrd et al., 2009; Fesenmaier et al., 2001). Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2008) point out that local people play an important role in creating unforgettable experiences for tourists and listen to their voice is crucial point in the development of sustainable tourism in a region. Residents can provide useful viewpoint to the destination competitiveness and so that their support is very important for several reasons:

- they are possible customers of the tourism products in a certain area
- they use local facilities and services and so that they can share their positive or negative experiences with tourists in face-to-face or for instance on the social media sites
- tourists sometimes ask residents for their advice on where to go, what to see, do and eat in the area
- residents can bring their friends and relatives to visit the attraction or restaurants which they perceive as quality ones in the area (Morrison, 2013, p. 224).

The basic theory of stakeholders was provided by Freeman (1984, p. 46) who defines stakeholders as *“any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives.”* Stakeholder theory applied to business determines eight groups of stakeholders *“investors, customers, suppliers, employees, communities, trade associations, governments, and political groups”* (Swain & Mishra, 2012, p. 233). In case of the tourism industry, Morrison (2013, p. 222) simply defines stakeholders as *“those directly involved with tourism.”* Byrd et al. (2009, p. 694) recognize four main stakeholders in the tourism industry *“tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and local governmental officials.”* On the other hand, Swain and Mishra (2012, p. 543) divide tourism stakeholders into six groups as can be seen in Figure 11.



Source: Swain & Mishra, 2012, p. 544

*Figure 11 Stakeholders in tourism business*

As Gomezelj (2011) notices the most common methods used by researchers in tourism studies are from visitors' perspectives and only few can be found from other stakeholders' viewpoint. Nevertheless, due to the limitation in visiting time and so that lack of familiarity with the place, visitors sometimes cannot provide depth insight into the attractiveness of destination and understanding of some components which influence tourism in particular region (Gomezelj, 2011; Enright & Newton, 2005).

## **2.7 Selected model and indicators for the purpose of the thesis**

Previous sections have introduced several models and indicators proposed by different authors in order to measure destination competitiveness. The comprehensive literature reviews helped the researcher to provide deep understanding of the issue of destination competitiveness. It also allows researcher to choose an appropriate framework for assessing the destination competitiveness of Zlín region. This section is going to introduce the theoretical framework for the purpose of the thesis.

The researcher decides to follow the "*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*" proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003). Dwyer and Kim (2003) develop model by taking into account components suggested in the literature on business competitiveness as well as by tourism researcher, especially by Crouch and Ritchie.



Dwyer and Kim (2003) stress that this model can be used either as a whole comparing all determinants of the destination competitiveness or to assess competitiveness of certain groups. In addition, new indicators can be added to the original list (see Appendix 2) any time (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*” is able to provide framework which evaluate the destination competitiveness of a whole country as well as its regions (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

All these arguments show that this model is appropriate for the purpose of assessing destination competitiveness of Zlín region.

Due to the complexity of the selected model and the fact that competitiveness of Zlín region will be assessed not only by experts but also by local people, the “soft” indicators were selected. According to these, the destination can be measured subjectively (“*soft measures*“), such as cultural or natural attractiveness and/or quality of services provided to visitors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The soft measures are usually connected with the perception of visitors. Nevertheless, because of the limitation in visiting time and so that lack of familiarity with the place, visitors sometimes cannot provide depth insight into the attractiveness of destination and understanding of some components which influence tourism in particular region (Gomezelj, 2011; Enright & Newton, 2005). For this reason, researcher has decided to concentrate its work on perception of local people as well as people in managing positions related to the tourism in Zlín region.

Attention is focused on Endowed and Created resources. Endowed resources focus on competitiveness of “*Natural resources*” and “*Culture/Heritage.*” The Created resources assessed the competitiveness of “*tourism infrastructure, range of activities, shopping, entertainment and special events/festivals*” (Dwyer & Kim, 2003, p. 400). These factors have been chosen because its responses are not entirely depending on the deep knowledge of respondents and so that there can be easily answered by local people.

This section has selected appropriate theoretical framework based on which the interview questions will be developed. It has also answered the first research objective “*to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlín region.*”

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In accordance with Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p. 2) research is “*the process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study*” and this process includes several steps that are designed in order to find answers to the researcher’s problem. The methodological choices consider the purpose of the study, the research design, research methods, data collection and sampling for the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012, p. 161). Therefore, this chapter provides details of the research methods employed in this study in order to help answer the research question of this thesis.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Bryman (2012, p. 46) stress that a research designs provides “*a framework for the collection and analysis of data.*” Firstly, researchers need to decide whether the quantitative or qualitative research design will be followed (Saunders et al., 2012). Bryman (2012) points out the main difference between quantitative and qualitative research. According to Bryman (2012) quantitative research collects data in the form of numbers. It provides data which are hard and reliable. On the other hand, qualitative method provides deep and rich data in the form of words (Bryman, 2012).

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design is adopted. Quantitative research dominates in previous studies of tourism destination competitiveness (for instance Dwyer et al., 2004; Enright & Newton, 2004; 2005; Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). This research shows what people perceive, but it usually does not clarify why they perceive in a certain way (Sharpley, 2014). Therefore, Deery, Jago and Frenline (2012) encourage researchers to use qualitative methods in studies. As Crouch (2011) states using qualitative data offer valuable insight to people’s mind, knowledge and experiences and it can be a helpful starting point when analysing destination competitiveness.

#### **3.3 Design in qualitative research: Case study**

Several designs can be recognized in qualitative research. Case study is one of them (Flick, 2014). Case study provides deep understanding of a particular case (Silverman, 2010).

Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p. 30) define case study as “*a problem-solving technique*” mainly providing qualitative data for analysis.

In case study research method, *single case* versus *multiple cases* can be differentiated (Yin, 2014). A single case provides the possibility to analyse issues which have not been widely considered to a great extent (Saunders et al., 2012). In this dissertation, Zlín region has been treated as a single case study. Despite the fact that using the single case study has been criticised for its generalisability, it has been widely applied as a useful approach to gain insight and understanding of a real-world problem (Yin, 2014). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 179) find case study strategy suitable for resulting “*a rich understanding*” of a certain research problem. It helps researchers to explore issues that are less comprehended (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000, p. 82).

The unit of analysis can be *holistic* or *embedded* (Saunders et al., 2012). Yin (2014, p. 241) defines unit of analysis as “*the case in a case study.*” Because several units of analysis are considered when analysing Zlín region (local people and experts), embedded case study has been used.

Moreover, Yin (2014, p. 4) explain that using case study method is appropriate if the research tends to answer question “*how*” or “*why.*” This dissertation tries to answer the question “*How can the competitiveness of Zlín region as an international tourist destination be assessed.*” As there has been found a lack of attention towards competitiveness in certain regions, particularly in the Czech Republic in the previous studies, the purpose is to gain a rich understanding of this research problem. Thus, the researcher believes that the case study research method is appropriate for determining the destination competitiveness of Zlín region.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Primary and secondary sources can be used for collecting data. Secondary data was gathered in previous researches and it can provide useful background for collecting primary data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In the introduction and the literature review section, several journal articles, academic books and appropriate websites have been used to better understand the competitiveness problem connected with the tourism destination. Therefore, the data analysis section will be built upon the theoretical knowledge gain in the previous parts.

Primary data is “*original*” data collected for the purpose of a specific research (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013, p. 56). These data can be obtained through several methods such as questionnaire, focus groups and so on (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). For this study, an in-depth interview method has been chosen because it has been seen as the most suitable tool for gaining deep understanding of a certain research problem.

### **3.5 Data collection method: Interviews**

Interview, observation and focus groups are one of the methods of collecting qualitative data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 185). The interview method has been selected for the purpose of this study. According to Flick (2014, p. 199) this method provides in-depth information rather than “*yes-or-no, agree-or-disagree*” answers. As Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p. 185) point out the advantage of interview is its flexibility and possibility to change and adapt questions as the interview flows. On the top of that, interviews provide important insight and evidence to case studies (Yin, 2014).

Interview can be arranged “*face-to face, by telephone or online*” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 192). Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages as it can be seen in Table 3.

Due to the fact that this research takes place across geographical area (Zlín region, Czech Republic) and it was beyond the researcher possibility to travel to this destination (lack of time, money), the face-to-face interview was evaluated as a not appropriate method. Potential participants have been asked whether they prefer telephone or online interview. Majority of them preferred online interview, therefore this method has been chosen as the most convenient one.

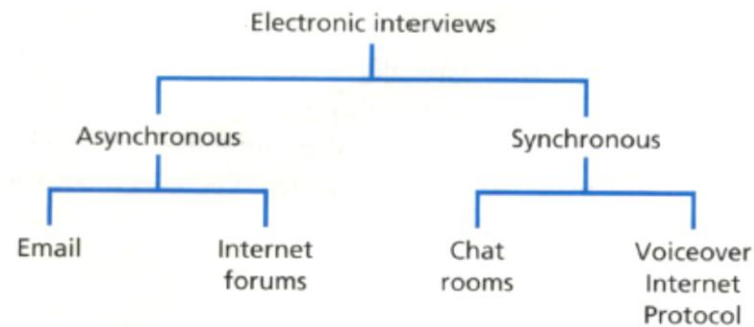
As Flick (2014) points out the progress in technological and digital world has been affecting everyone`s life and its influence has been registered in the research as well. Hence, online qualitative research is becoming more common among researchers.

<b>Interview types</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information gained from body language, non-verbal communication</li> <li>• possibility to explain ambiguity and clarify doubts immediately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• geographical limitation</li> <li>• some respondents might feel uncomfortable when interacting directly with interviewer</li> </ul>
Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possibility to reach people spread over large geographical area</li> <li>• safe travel costs, time</li> <li>• eliminates any discomfort that some respondents might feel when facing the interviewer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impossibility to read non-verbal communication</li> <li>• the length of telephone interview is unlikely to be sustained for too long</li> <li>• cannot provide visual aids</li> </ul>
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possibility to reach people spread over large geographical area and people that are not easily accessible</li> <li>• safe travel costs, time</li> <li>• provide anonymity if people do not want to talk to stranger</li> <li>• can provide more open, honest responses</li> <li>• data are already available in the form of text – no need of transcription</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hard to read non-verbal communication (except online video interview, e.g. Skype)</li> <li>• exchanging offline questions can be time-consuming as there might be delay between a question being asked and it being answered</li> <li>• problem with detection of a person's identity</li> </ul>

Source: On researcher's own supported by Flick, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012; Bryman, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010

*Table 3 Interview types (Advantages & Disadvantages)*

Online interview offers several ways by which respondents can be targeted as it can be seen in Figure 12 (Flick, 2014). There are two basic forms of online interview: *synchronous and asynchronous*. Synchronous form is the direct exchange of questions and answers in chatroom, messenger and social network sites. This can be also done through so called “*Voiceover Internet Protocol*” which includes services such as Skype by which online interview can be conducted in the real time (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 407). Asynchronous form concerns with the issue where interviewer and interviewee are not online at the same time and hence, answers are exchanged in some time, mostly by e-mail or social media sites such as facebook.com (Flick, 2014). This dissertation uses a combination of both forms.



Source: Saunders et al., 2012, p. 405

*Figure 12 Forms of electronic interview*

Data can be collected through structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 192).

Structured interviews are often connected with the survey style (Finn et al., 2000). Interviewer asks set of standardised questions to each participant (Saunders et al., 2012). The researcher guides the interview and the main aim is to deliver the same interview process to each respondent without any additional asked questions (Coles et al., 2013; Bryman, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews are based on a list of prepared questions or topics needed to be obtained from respondents, however the flow of the interview is non-standardised (Bryman, 2012). Interview is guided in a flexible way so that each participant can add and discuss any topic related to the study (Flick, 2014). Questions do not have to follow the interview guide and any additional probing question can be asked (Bryman, 2012; Finn et al., 2000).

Unstructured interview allows respondents to talk freely about issues related to the research topic. There is no prepared set of questions, however there should be a clear idea of what needs to be achieved by the interview (Saunders et al., 2012).

This research is conducted in accordance with the particular model hence, areas of question important for this study have been prepared. However, each participant has the right to provide their own insight into the studied problem. Thus, the format of semi-structured interview is followed.

### 3.6 Sampling

Sampling is “*a process of selecting participants for a piece of research*” (Finn et al., 2000, p. 110). Sampling of the research should represent wider population so the results are representative and they are not limited to individuals (Flick, 2014). This is achieved by probability sampling. Nevertheless, in the qualitative research design is common to use “*non-probability sampling techniques*” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 163). That means the respondents are chosen according to their relevance to the study rather than according to the statistical representativeness of population (Flick, 2014, p. 137). Despite the fact that Sekaran and Bougie (2010) argue that generalizability of non-probability sampling is limited, this process suits the best to this type of study. It allows researcher to select sample which exactly fits to the research problem.

In addition, Bryman (2012) explains that research questions provide guidance in the process of selecting the sample. This case study focuses on analysing one region and in accordance with that the respondents from this area are selected. The purposive sample is chosen from the group of non-probability sampling techniques. This sample selects respondents according to their knowledge about the examined topic (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 297). This dissertation focuses on identifying fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region from the different perspective of its stakeholders. For the purpose of this dissertation the stakeholders are local people and experts in positions related to the tourism in Zlín region. According to these criteria the research sample has been selected.

Potential participants for this interview were contacted in conformity with advice of Flick (2014). Flick (2014) suggests that the easiest way to contact people is to use e-mail addresses that researcher already owns or those that can be obtain from websites of companies or institutions related to the research. Furthermore, information about the research can be posted to the discussion group of certain websites, on chatrooms or social media page in order to invite people to take part in the interview (Flick, 2014, p. 234).

The process of selecting appropriate sample for this research included several steps. Firstly, several e-mail addresses have been obtained from institutional websites. For the scope of this dissertation researcher has decided to contact those experts that are working in institutions connected with development and promotion of the tourism in Zlín region. These participants can provide more comprehensive assessment of destination

competitiveness of the whole region instead of only some of its parts. In the middle of June, invitation e-mail to take part in this interview was sent to totally twenty-five potential respondents from the expert's sides. In this e-mail, the purpose of this study was explained and the anonymity was guaranteed. Methods of collecting interview data (e-mail, telephone, skype) were proposed. Reminding e-mail was sent to all respondents again after two weeks. From the twenty-five potential respondents, seven answered to this invitation e-mail. Three of them claimed that they do not perceive themselves as appropriate respondents for this study. Four of them were willing participate in this interview and they agreed on communication through e-mail. However, one of the experts has cancelled the interview date later due to the personal problems. At the end three experts were interviewed.

Local people were contacted by combination of e-mail and social media site (facebook.com). E-mail was sent to the former teachers and to people who lives in different parts of Zlín region and the researcher already know them. Social media site was used for the purpose of inviting more people to take part in this research. For this purpose several group pages connected with Zlín region were used. The invitation process was exactly the same as in the case of experts. People on the facebook pages were asked to contact researcher in case they are interested and willing to take part in this interview. At the end the sample size of local people was limited to the number of 12, as the saturation point seems to be reached by this number. As Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p. 297) stress the diversity of respondents should be still reflected in the purposive sampling. Due to this the researcher tried to include respondents from different parts of Zlín region (mainly from the bigger cities Zlín, Kroměříž, Uherské Hradiště, Vsetín and its nearby villages) as well as from different age groups (24-58).

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Qualitative method provides data in the form of words, such as interview notes, transcription of video or audio recording (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 269). This data needs to be interpreted. Flick (2014, p. 375) defines interpretation as *“the core activity of qualitative data analysis for understanding or explaining what is in the data.”* Data for interpretation is prepared through coding which is *“a process of labelling and categorizing data as a first step in the analysis”* (Flick, 2014, p. 373). In other words data is classified into categories with another similar data (Flick, 2014, p. 45).



Flick (2014) suggests that it is useful to transcribe only those parts of interview which are important for answering research questions. However, online interviewing is very helpful in the way that interview does not need to be transcribed as the data are already accessible in the form of text.

The interview data in this research is going to be categorized due to its accordance with the specific indicators of the selected model. Then, the data will be interpreted and analyze in order to answer the research objective. This process is going to be done with the help of the software package NVivo 10.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

Ethics in the research applies to “*a code of conduct or expected societal norm of behaviour while conduction research*” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 15). According to Yin (2014, p. 77) every researcher should consider ethical issues in the research concerning “*human subjects.*”

This research is undertaken in accordance with the “*Ethical Guidelines for Good practices in Teaching & Research*” published by the Huddersfield University Ethics Committee (2011). Researcher has respected the matters of confidentiality and anonymity. The research was done in honest way and did not cause any harm to respondents. Before collecting the research data, ethical approval form was signed by supervisor Sabrina Thornton, who also consulted with the researcher appropriate ethical guidelines when conducting research (see Appendix 4).

Furthermore, participation in this research was voluntary and no participant was forced to take part in this research. All participants received a letter where they were informed about the purpose of this study, data collection method and the fact that this research is anonymous and the data will be used only for the purpose of the dissertation. All participants were ensured that no name or job position will be used in the dissertation in order to offer anonymity. Each participant has to confirm that he/she agrees to take part in the research. No sensitive questions were asked, however, any participant had the right to refuse any question which he/she feels uncomfortable with.

### 3.9 Interview design

The interviews took place during the two week time at the end of July and the beginning of August (30<sup>th</sup> of July – 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2014). As mentioned before, invitation e-mail and invitation on Facebook group pages was sent to potential participants in the middle of June. Respondents who were willing to take part in this researcher prefer the online interview method. The exact date was agreed with respondents (totally seven local people) who selected synchronous form of online interview (“live” exchange of interview questions through the Facebook messenger). The rest of the interviewee, eight people (five local people and three experts), who agreed on the asynchronous form of online interview, were informed when the first e-mail will be sent to them. After that, following e-mails with more questions were sent to the respondents further as needed. Even though Saunders et al. (2012) stress that exchanging offline questions might be time-consuming, all respondents were very helpful and no significant problem was noticed with this form of interview. All interviews were conducted in Czech language and they were translated into English language by researcher.

Before the main interviews, pilot interviews were conducted with two family members. Silverman (2010) highlights the importance of trying out interview questions before the major study as an essential feature of a strong research. After the pilot interviews no crucial problem was found, nevertheless some questions were clarified more precisely due to its better understanding. This approach provides extra validity to the research.

As previously stated, the researcher decides to follow the “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*” proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003) due to their “*soft*” indicators. Attention was focused on Endowed and Created resources. According to this model and after the pilot study following interview questions were developed as it can be seen in Table 4. Each of the questions is connected with the certain part of the Dwyer and Kim’s model (2003). Additional possible probing questions were prepared, however these questions were mainly asked by the “flow” of the interview in accordance with the indicators proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003).

<b>Opening Questions</b>	
How do you like Zlín region?	<i>Possible probing questions:</i> Why do you like or do not like this region, what would you change?

Is there anything interesting about this region?	<i>Possible probing questions:</i> Why not, Why yes (develop conversation in order to explain further) How does it differ from other regions?
<b>Questions connected with Endowed resources</b>	
<b>Natural resources</b>	
What do you think about natural resources in Zlín region?	<i>Possible probing questions:</i> Namely, which ones do you considered attractive, what would you change?
<b>Cultural resources</b>	
What do you think about cultural and heritage sites in Zlín region?	<i>Possible probing questions:</i> Namely which ones do you considered attractive, what would you change?
<b>Questions connected with Created resources</b>	
<b>Tourism infrastructure</b>	
What do you think about the infrastructure in Zlín region?	<i>Possible probing questions:</i> What do you think about transportation services around this region? What do you think about the accommodation? What do you think about restaurant services? What do you think about accessibility of tourist information?
<b>Range of activities</b>	
Which activities would you recommend to international tourists in Zlín region?	
<b>Shopping</b>	
What do you think about shopping possibilities in Zlín region?	<i>Possible probing question:</i> Do you think shopping possibilities could be interesting for visitors? What do you think about the possibilities to buy traditional local products?
<b>Entertainment</b>	
What do you think about the level of entertainment this region can offer?	
<b>Special events/festivals</b>	
What do you think about special events/festivals in the region?	<i>Possible probing question:</i> Which one are interested for you? Which one could be interested for tourists?
<b>Closing Questions</b>	
What in your opinion could increase the arrival of global tourists to Zlín region?	
Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?	

Source: On researcher's own supported by the Integrated model of destination competitiveness proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003)

*Table 4 Interview Questions*

Furthermore, additional website link was sent to each participant at the end of the interview process. The purpose of this link was to rate fourteen factors on a 5-point scale related to the quality and attractiveness of Zlín region. This online document was placed on

the Czech portal [vyplnto.cz](http://vyplnto.cz), which provides basic services for free and it is well-known among Czech people. This rating provides useful summary of how people assessed particular factors in statistical numbers.

The Summarized interview schedule with the opening letter can be seen in Appendix 3.

### **3.10 Limitation of the study**

Coles et al. (2013, p. 163) stress that *“effective researchers are able to demonstrate their ability to acknowledge limitations in their work.”*

Despite the fact that the researcher tried to conduct this research in the best possible way some limitations can be found. Firstly, the lack of experience with interview approach can be one of these. The interview was done in accordance with the suggestions find in the literature and with the help of researcher`s supervisor. Nevertheless, as this is the researcher`s first *“big”* interview study carried out there might be spotted some weaknesses.

Secondly, the limitation of this study is connected with the external validity and generalizability. The purpose was to select sample which fits to the research problem. The saturation seemed to be reached by the number of 12 local people in the interviews, but more experts could be included in this study, as the results are only limited to a certain range of tourism-related sectors. Nevertheless this was hard to achieve due to their busy schedule. Local people from different location of Zlin region took part in this research, but there are still several parts of Zlín region which has not been represented in this study and some additional views might be gained from these areas. Moreover, this study reflects perception of only two groups of stakeholders, hence it might not provide different views of other groups. As it was beyond researcher possibility due to the limitation of time and resources, the sample size is limited. Therefore, it cannot be considered as an entirely representative sample of the whole Zlin region compare to the number of inhabitants that actually live there. Still, the researcher believes that this study provides valuable insight into the stakeholders´ perception of factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region.

Finally, despite the long study of English language and the fact that researcher´s language skills have noted significant progress during the last year at the University of Huddersfield, some language barriers can be found as English is not the researcher`s mother tongue.

#### 4 THE CASE STUDY OF ZLÍN REGION

The researcher finds essential to provide brief introduction of Zlín region before the data analysis and research findings mainly for a better understanding of this investigated area.

The Zlín region lies in the eastern part of the Czech Republic, border with Slovakia, and with its area size 3.964 km<sup>2</sup> is the fourth smallest region in the country (Climact, 2014; BusinessInfo, 2011). Population of approximately 600.000 inhabitants is spread over three territories called Moravian Wallachia, Moravian Slovakia and Haná (Climact, 2014; Jeneralova, 2011). Most of its population is employed in industrial companies and the unemployment rate is above average in some parts of this region (BusinessInfo, 2011). In total, Zlín region is divided into four parts: Moravian Wallachia, The Region of Kroměříž, The Moravian Slovakia and The areas of Zlín and Luhačovice (Zakutny, 2007).



Source: Climact, 2014

*Figure 13 The map of Zlín region, the Czech Republic*

## 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings of the research. In the introduction section the main research question has been defined as *“How can the competitiveness of Zlín region as an international tourist destination can be assessed?”* In other words, this thesis tries to identify fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region from different stakeholders` view. On the basis of this, three objectives have been set:

- to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlin region
- to investigate how different stakeholders perceive various aspects of Zlin region as an international tourist destination
- to provide recommendation that can help Zlin region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination

The first objective *“to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlín region”* was already answered in the section 2.7. The researcher decides to follow the *“Integrated model of destination competitiveness”* proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003) due to their *“soft”* indicators. Attention is focused on Endowed and Created resources. Interview questions were developed based on this framework and it provides the basis for answering the next two objectives.

This chapter deals mainly with the second objective *“to investigate how different stakeholders perceive various aspects of Zlín region as an international tourist destination.”*

The third objective *“to provide recommendation that can help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination”* will be answered in the next chapter.

### 5.2 Assessing various aspects of Zlín region

The researcher decides to follow the *“Integrated model of destination competitiveness”* proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003) due to their *“soft”* indicators. Attention is focused on Endowed and Created resources. According to this model interview questions have been developed. Each of the questions is connected to the certain part of the Dwyer and Kim`s model (2003). Additional possible probing questions have been prepared as well as opening and closing questions. The results of each interviewee area will be provided in separate subsections.

### 5.2.1 Opening questions

The opening questions asked details about how interviewees like Zlín region and if there is anything interesting and different compare to other regions in the Czech Republic.

Firstly, respondents agreed that they like Zlín region. Some of them stated that they grew up here and they feel that they belong here. They are various aspects that people appreciated about this region, mainly the beauty of the nature, the greenery of landscapes with woods, unique architecture, dynamics Moravian traditions and peaceful and pleasant environment for living. *“I think here is everything for everyone”* and *“on whether side of the region you decide to go you will find something interesting”* were one of the participants’ answers.

One of the respondents said *“there are small problems compare to other regions...I feel safe here, crime is at a low level, and there is no fear to go out at night.”* This statement is in consistent with several researchers (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Hong-bumm, 1998) who highlight safety as a significant factor which influence tourists’ choice of destination. Moreover, people around the city of Zlín appreciated the fact that this place is constantly renovating and modernizing.

As Haugland et al. (2011) point out, to find the potential of a destination is an important factor to attract tourists. However, local people complained about the unused potential of this region, mainly connected with cultural activities. One respondent stated:

*“There are so many town squares which could be effectively used for some public events. Towns could focus on developing cultural activities but instead of that new shopping centre and another useless building are continuously built here. In my opinion, it cannot find use in this region due to the small amount of inhabitants that live here.”*

Respondents also brought out the fact that it is hard to find a job here and yet, this region is one of the most expensive in the Czech Republic. People are often leaving to find a job in other parts of the country and several companies are conducting their business in different regions due to the higher prices. Nevertheless, tourism can improve awareness, enhance regional economic development and employment, bring higher profit to business and overall reduce inequalities among regions (Jackson, 2006; Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). It was already point out that tourism created almost 266 million jobs worldwide and particularly in the Czech Republic employs more than 230 thousand people (WTTC, 2014; TTG, 2014). All these statements show that increasing tourism could be beneficial in this region.

*“I can see there is a potential for tourism which is still relatively uncovered area here and it would be great to develop this place mainly by improving services and creating exciting tourism products”* argued one respondent.

Secondly, traditions, diversity of the region and significant places and events were named as three attributes people perceive interesting and different compare to other parts of the Czech Republic.

Dynamic Moravian traditions connected with drinking the local wine as well as tasting the popular plum distillate spirit Slivovice, pig-sticking feasts and the traditional folklore with folk costumes and songs were assess as highly interesting aspect this region can provide compare to others.

*“There are folklore tradition which cannot be found anywhere in the world.”*

*“People, especially in villages, follow traditions and they are very hospitable and warm.”*

Respondents also stressed the diversity of this region. It is a small region with lots of opportunities. Spa town and mountains, modern towns compare to historical towns, castles, chateaus, UNESCO heritage sites, and pilgrimage place that all was acknowledge by respondents as a significant element of region’s diversity. Three different territories (Wallachia, Moravian Slovakia, Haná) provide different traditions and type of people. Interesting point was brought out by one of the participant: *“this region is small and due to the fact people can experience everything from it in a relatively small amount of time.”*

People acknowledged several places and events that give Zlín region its face. Unique Zlin architecture connected with the personality of Tomas Bata, the founder of the worldwide known shoes company Bata. The zoological garden in Zlín was assessed by each participant as one of the most beautiful garden in the Czech Republic. Moreover it is the spa town Luhačovice, pilgrimage place Velehrad and events such as Zlín film festival and Barum Czech rally that give the region its face. According to people this places and events makes Zlín region known from outside its regional borders. However one of the respondents added that *“for some time I live in the capital (Prague) and most of the people in this part do not know anything about this region...they do not know why or what is significant about this region. I think it is shame that you can hardly hear about Zlín region because there is basically no promotion.”*



This second interview question provided evidence that no matter from which part of the region participants are, they all have clear idea about attributes that differentiate this region and make it interesting.

### **5.2.2 Natural resources**

Dwyer and Kim (2003) classify natural resources among the endowed category. Natural resources of a destination are important for a satisfaction of visitors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). This interview question asked details about what local people and expert think about the natural resources in Zlín region.

Nature of the region was perceived as competitive, mainly due to its beauty and greenery of landscapes, however five local people do not recall any specific natural scenery and they talk mainly about water reservoir, town parks and zoological garden.

Nevertheless, majority of interviewee (10 out of 15) were able to name at least three interesting natural scenery of this region. Mainly Wallachian territory is recognized for its natural beauty due to its protected landscapes Beskydy Mountains and also White Carpathians located in the territory of Zlín and Uherské Hradiště. One of the experts explained that *“30 percent of the area is covered by protected landscapes...region offers opportunity to live in relatively clean environment in almost all its parts (except small section around Valašské Meziříčí)...White Carpathians are place of special type of orchid flowers... the presence of rare kinds of wolves and bears can be recorded in some localities, which shows the quality of the nature.”* However, apart from experts, local people lack of information about uniqueness of flora and fauna in this region and they claimed that the awareness should be higher.

### **5.2.3 Heritage and culture**

Heritage and culture, as a part of endowed resources, is crucial for attracting tourists to a destination (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). This interview question asked details about what stakeholders think about the cultural and heritage sites in Zlín region.

In this interview section people often tend to start talking about cultural activities, events and festivals which better fit into the Created resources. Due to that most of these answers will be used in next sections. Researcher directed participants to talk more about heritage sites, museums, architecture and cultural precincts which respondents perceived as

sufficient. *“The cultural sites are very rich and I am not able to say which one is the most interesting”* stated one of the interviewees.

People assessed architecture, interesting museum exposition, castles, chateaux and traditional folk villages at a good level. One of the experts points out that castles and chateaux are very attractive with high visiting numbers.

Local people and experts found the shoe museum in Zlín connected with the history of Tomas Bata and the Wallachian open air museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm which offers information about local traditions as the most interesting museums in the region. They also recommended visiting the city Zlín and its functionalism architecture and the architecture connected with the spa town Luhačovice.

Respondents first recalled the cultural and heritage sites which are in or closest to their hometown. *“I found the personality of Tomas Bata extremely interesting and here, in Zlín, is so much information about him... everyone who is coming to Zlín region should visit the Shoe museum and learn about the life and work of Tomas Bata”* stated one respondent living in the city Zlín. On the other hand, one respondent who grew up in Kroměříž started to first talk about UNESCO heritage sites this town offers and again people located in Moravian Slovakia territory point out firstly the unique folk culture. This finding is consistent with those of McCool and Martin (1994) who find out that people are attached to places where they were born or where they have stayed the longest period of their life.

#### **5.2.4 Tourism infrastructure**

Tourism infrastructure is one of the indicator of created resources (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). In this interview question, the aim was to find out how stakeholders assess infrastructure in Zlín region. According to Dwyers and Kim's (2003) model the attention was mainly focused on transportation, accommodation, restaurants and information services, its quality, variety and efficiency.

There is an easy access to the area from cities and airports outside the region due to the newly built highway. Transport situation in bigger towns were assessed as satisfactory, but the bus and train service to the small locations and to the historical and natural sites located outside the towns are very limited and inadequate according to stakeholders' perception. *“It might be very hard for tourists, especially international ones, to be able to get from one place to another without car...there are several taxi services but for non-local people is not*

*easy to get access to these...Taxi are not located on the streets and it is not easy to find their numbers”* claimed one respondent.

Even though respondents agreed that the situation is getting better, there is still big step towards improvement according to them. *“After separation with Slovak republic in 1993, Zlín region changed from being the region in the middle of state to the border region, which led to the neglect of transport infrastructure. This is one of the things that should be change here”* explained one of the experts. Nevertheless, as one of the experts claimed, this improvement is not entirely in the power of the region as transport services are in the hand of companies often located outside the region.

In accordance with the infrastructure people often talked about the construction of the new cycle path that could attract more tourists to the region. Nevertheless they point out there is a lack of lending services which would provide sports equipment, for instance bicycles, to tourists.

There was found a perception that accommodation and food services are available in a large quantity, nevertheless the quality of the services is worst. With regard to the accommodation two respondents claimed that they do not have any experience with accommodation services the region provides. The rest of them agreed that even though popular tourist destination such as spa town Luhačovice can offer some high quality hotels, most of the town hotels are old-fashioned and in small location can be very hard to find any accommodation at all. One respondent stated that the quality of accommodation is appropriate for undemanding customers, but according to his opinion there is a lack of five stars hotels for congress tourism.

In terms of food services, the problem was found with the fact that only few places respect the region’s traditions and specialty. Most respondents were not satisfied with its quality as well. Some respondents noticed that except high quality hotels and restaurants there is a lack of information in English language. *“I have never seen menu in English language in the places where are usually go to eat or have a pint of beer”* one respondent pointed out and also added *“the language skills of the staff are not very high so I guess this can be quite a problem for tourists who wants to taste the atmosphere of local pubs.”* On the other hand respondents were highly satisfied with the places where they can go just sit down and chat with friends over a cup of coffee, beer or glass of wine. Each of them has some favourite places to *“hang out”* which they would recommend to others.

Tourism information was evaluated in a satisfactory quality. Local people knew exactly where to find information centre in their home place and which websites to visit if they need more information. One of the respondents mentioned that Zlín region issues magazine which can be found in a post box every month with all information about activities and events taking place in the region. People agreed that information on websites operates in good quality and with today's technology should not be hard to find all necessary information tourists need for their trips.

Overall the perception of tourism infrastructure in Zlín region was not assessed very high. However, infrastructure can be seen as a crucial element of successful destination. Murphy et al. (2000) identify infrastructure as an important factor affecting visitor experience. Its lack can have negative effect on quality and perception of the destination (Murphy et al., 2000). Furthermore, success of the destination depends on the competitive advantage rather than the comparative one and the created resources such as tourism infrastructure, are those by which competitive advantage can be achieved (Bordas, 1994; Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

On the other hand, Dwyer and Kim (2003) argue that there are forms of tourism, for instance nature-based or adventure tourism, where the experiences are based on the lack of tourism infrastructure.

### **5.2.5 Range of activities**

Dwyer and Kim (2003) argue that activities are important tourists "attractor" and their diversity in a destination can provide the possibility to attract different segments of tourists. Therefore, this interview question tried to find out which activities would stakeholders recommend to international tourists in Zlín region.

This question showed that stakeholders had clear ideas about the range of activities they would recommend to tourists coming from different countries.

Respondents recommended these types of activities:

- relaxing activities connected with wellness, walks in the nature, recreation cruises on the Baťa canal on the river Morava and visiting popular zoological garden in Zlín
- activities connected with culture such as exploring folklore traditions with tasting traditional local delicacies, visiting museums, architecture, heritage and pilgrimage site

- sports activities such as cycling, horse riding, swimming in natural reservoirs, visiting aquaparks, playing golf and winter skiing

The current findings support the statement of Johnson (1995) who said the mass tourism segment is hard to attract due to the fact that the Czech Republic lack of seaside. Hence, the destinations in the Czech Republic should focus their attention on attracting tourists who are interested in “*culture and heritage, spas, businesses, education and/or outdoor activities*” (Johnson, 1995, p. 27).

In addition, this shows that Zlín region could achieve advantage of the “*new-age tourists*” trend. According to this trend tourists are becoming adventurous. They enjoy sports, nature and they try to experience the local culture (Swain & Mishra, 2012, p. 40).

Local people chose more or less the same range of activities they would recommend to global tourists. This can provide useful insight into the activities which local people perceive as the most interesting ones in the region and therefore, the attention can be focused on the promotion of these activities. Moreover, it can show which activities might be in the shadow and due to that pay more attention on increasing the awareness of these.

### **5.2.6 Shopping**

This interview question tried to find the opinion of stakeholders about shopping possibilities in the region. It was found out that this indicator was not assessed as a strong one. Stakeholders agreed that there is large chain of supermarkets, however there is “*nothing special*” in comparison with some other regions. “*Here are plenty of supermarkets as in any other region of the Czech Republic and honestly I do not think that the value for money is so good...personally I prefer going shopping to bigger cities in nearby regions*” one respondent stated.

The researcher was interested in how stakeholders perceive the possibility to buy traditional local products due to the fact that traditions were seen as highly attractive factor in the region. Local people perceived that traditional products or any souvenir cannot be found in towns. According to them it is only possible to buy them around the heritage sites (castles, chateaux etc.), farmers’ markets, folklore events and/or with small tradesmen who are mainly located in villages. However, they agreed that the awareness and promotion is very low and it might be problem for non-local people to find any. “*To buy traditional products is possible, but tourists – persons interested in these products must look very*

*hard*” explained one of the experts supported by statement of one of the residents that *“it is really difficult to bring any kind of souvenir from this region.”* On the other hand another expert argued that there exist several shops with typical folk products. Nevertheless this result shows that most of the people do not know about it.

Dwyer and Kim (2003) find that for some nations shopping is a significant part of its travel experience. Moreover, shopping tourism is one of the rising trends and its importance should not be underestimated in the tourism industry (Passport, 2013).

### **5.2.7 Entertainment**

The level of entertainment’s quality and variety was assessed as average with few interesting things taking place in a certain time of the year. However, stakeholders perceived that compare to others regions, the level of entertainment is rather behind. It was found out that experts saw the quality of entertainment higher than local people.

Mainly young people agreed there are few festivals, cinema and bars to have fun but the nightlife is still very poor. *“In the summer, several exciting festivals take place, however if someone is going to visit this place in any other season they will be bored”* was opinion of one of the young respondents.

New aquaparks and amusement park for children and cinema have been developed in the recent years. Some of the respondents saw the ticket price of these facilities as a problem compare to the average wage in this area.

As it was mentioned earlier respondents complained about the level of cultural activities in the region mainly associated with the activities of theatres and concerts. They agreed that activities of some towns towards the culture are attractive, but most of the towns stay behind despite the fact that there is the potential.

### **5.2.8 Special events/festivals**

The last indicator of the “created resources” group is special events and festivals according to the Inherited model of destination competitiveness. The main goal was to found out which events and festivals stakeholders perceive as interesting and which one could be attractive for tourists.

People agreed that several events and big festivals take place in the region and they are interesting not only for local people but also attract visitors from different towns and countries. According to the stakeholders, these are:

- traditional folk festival Ride of Kings in Vlčnov connected with folklore culture of the Moravian Slovakia region
- Barum Czech rally Zlín– exciting even for all racing fans, also very popular among international visitors, it attracts over 200 000 visitors every year as one of the experts pointed out
- International film festival for Children and Youth in Zlín is the biggest European film festival for children and youth
- Summer film school in Uherské Hradiště – the biggest non-competitive film festival in the Czech Republic presenting films, exciting guests and opportunity to take seminars connected with the movie industry. It attracts thousands of visitors every year
- Summer festival Trnobraň and Master of rock in Vizovice – stakeholders perceived the Master of rock as the biggest music festival in the region attracting thousands of international visitors due to the concentration of several global metal bands. However this festival attracts only specific group of people as one of the respondent pointed out. On the other hand, the summer festival Trnkobrání presents popular Czech bands and singers and it is the main attraction for Czech people. However, respondents agreed that it could show tourists more of the “real” region because this festival is not only based on pop music but also on folk traditions, food and culture.

These six main events/festivals were perceived by each respondent as the most interesting ones. Local people living in villages named other small events mainly based on the folklore traditions taking place in their hometown or nearby places, but overall experts were able to name more events and festivals than residents. One respondent explained that the region is attracting visitors to the same events every year, but they should develop more activities throughout the year. *“I think it could attract more visitors during the whole year not only in the summer period”* claimed one of the local people. This argument is supported by Crouch and Richie (1999) who state that festival and events are important as these can increase the level of interest for both local people and also for potential visitors. Moreover, Dwyer and Kim (2003) add that its growth potential is significant and it is a great instrument for bringing economic contribution to the destination.

In contrast with the opinion of local people, experts named several events and festivals that take place during the whole year and which residents did not have much awareness of.

### 5.2.9 Closing questions

The purpose of the closing question was to find out what could increase the arrival of global tourist to Zlín region in the opinion of its stakeholders.

Overall, stakeholders perceived that Zlín region needs more promotion, unique and specific tourism products, better language skills of people working in tourism sector and in sectors related to tourism, such as restaurants. This region also needs to improve infrastructure and organize more cultural activities. Some of the local people pointed out that there should be a travel agency which focus directly on foreign visitors and which could provide them information, guidance and trips in English language.

On the other hand, one respondent said that *“I am not interested in more tourists in Zlín region”* and further explained that the peaceful environment without crowded places is something he/she assessed as the biggest advantage of this region.

This finding is in agreement with Byrd et al. (2009) who find out, that residents can perceive tourism as a tool which can have negative impact on the environment of the place. Tourism is an important tool for economic development (UNWTO, 2014a). However, tourism development must be managed in sustainable way so the community is not disrupted by its effect (Byrd et al., 2009). Due to that it is important to include stakeholders into the tourism development. Developing successful tourism in an area becomes very difficult without the support of its stakeholder, particularly its community (Byrd et al., 2009; Fesenmaier, 2001).

One of the experts stated that *“the arrival of foreign tourists to Zlín region is continuously increasing for the past three years...I think this is due to the marketing activities promoting this region as well as the fact that the quality of services is gradually improving.”* According to one expert, it is important to sustain and continually increasing the arrival of foreign tourists to the Zlín region *“...marketing activities promoting this region must continue to be true, that means provide an expected quality”* explained one of the experts.

To find the marketing activities of this region is not the aim of this thesis, however some experts provided information about these. One of the expert stated that in terms of foreign tourists the region focuses on web advertisement and on the cooperating with experts from



other Moravian regions. This statement is supported by Haugland et al. (2011) who point out that cooperation between different regions in the country is beneficial in terms of exchanging information and knowledge.

On the other hand, for domestic market they use face-to-face communication, public relation activities and advertisement on internet with active facebook profile.

At the end of the interview, each participant has the opportunity to add anything else to this interview. Nevertheless, each interview was conducted in-depth and participants agreed that they provided deep answers of their perception towards tourism competitiveness of Zlín region.

#### **5.2.10 Rating of specific factors**

Additional website link was sent to each participant at the end of the interview process. The purpose of this link was to rate fourteen factors (which can be see below) on a 5-point scale related to the quality and attractiveness of Zlín region (1 = the best, 5 = the worst). This online document was placed on the Czech portal [vyplnto.cz](http://vyplnto.cz), which provides basic services for free and it is well-known among Czech people. This rating provides useful summary of how people assess particular factors in statistical numbers.

1. attractiveness of natural resources
2. cleanness of the destination
3. attractiveness of historic/heritage sites
4. level of interesting museums and galleries
5. attractiveness of local traditions
6. attractiveness of local cuisine
7. quality of local transport
8. quality of accommodation
9. quality of restaurants services
10. quality of information provided to tourists
11. range of possible activities
12. range of shopping possibilities
13. level of entertainment
14. attractiveness of events/festivals

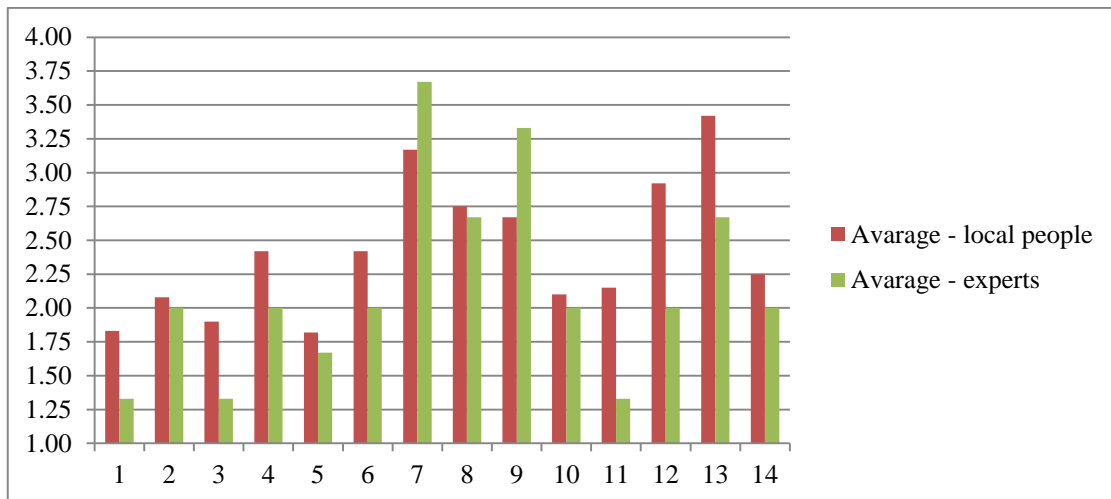
Different website links were sent to local people and to experts in order to better analyse the differences in the assessment of specific factors. In the following table, the average mark of each factor assessed by local people and experts is displayed as well as the variance. The variance shows how far the individual marks assessed by local people and experts are spread out from each other. The lower the number is the greater is the agreement between respondents in terms of assessing specific factors. The graphic design of the average marks is seen in Figure 14. The Excel Statistical functions were used for this data analysis.

Factor	Average - local people	Variance	Average - experts	Variance
1	1.83	0.47	1.33	0.22
2	2.08	0.74	2.00	0.00
3	1.90	1.18	1.33	0.22
4	2.42	0.91	2.00	0.00
5	1.82	0.88	1.67	0.22
6	2.42	0.58	2.00	0.00
7	3.17	0.97	3.67	0.22
8	2.75	0.52	2.67	0.22
9	2.67	0.40	3.33	0.22
10	2.10	0.56	2.00	0.22
11	2.15	0.69	1.33	0.22
12	2.92	0.74	2.00	0.00
13	3.42	0.91	2.67	0.22
14	2.25	0.69	2.00	0.22

Source: On researcher's own supported by interview data

*Table 5 Rating of specific factors*

As it can be seen there is no significant difference in how local people and expert assessed these factors. The biggest differences were seen in terms of assessing the range of shopping possibilities, the range of possible activities in the region and the level of entertainment. Nevertheless it needs to be pointed out that this assessment was provided by 12 local people and only three experts, therefore these results cannot be completely generalized.



Source: On researcher's own supported by interview data

*Figure 14 Rating of specific factors*

Local people perceived the attractiveness of local traditions as the most attractive factor in Zlín region followed by the attractiveness of natural resources. On the other hand, the lowest rating was assigned to the level of entertainment, followed by the quality of local transport. The variance between individual marks was lowest in terms of quality of restaurant services and attractiveness of natural resources. The variance in rating the attractiveness of historic/heritage sites was the highest.

Experts perceived the attractiveness of natural resources and the historic/heritage sites as well as the range of possible activities as the highest competitive factor in Zlín region. The quality of local transport, followed by the quality of restaurant services was rated as the lowest competitive factor. Overall the variance in individual marks was very low, in some cases even zero. This shows that experts' perception of quality and attractiveness of particular factors are in accordance with each other. Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed again that only three experts took part in this assessment, therefore these results cannot be completely generalized.

### **5.3 Summary of findings**

This section provides an overall summary of the results of this research. Based on the previous sections following findings can be summarized:

- respondents appreciated the beauty of the nature, the greenery of landscapes with woods, unique architecture, dynamics Moravian traditions and peaceful and pleasant environment for living in Zlín region

- on the other hand, they complained about the unused potential of this region, mainly connected with cultural activities, they also complained about infrastructure, in particularly poor transportation service, and difficulties with finding job in this region
- traditions, diversity of the region and significant places and events were named as three attributes people perceived interesting and different in the region compare to other parts of the Czech Republic
- endowed resources (natural and culture/heritage) were assessed as competitive
- nature of the region was perceived as competitive, mainly due to its beauty and greenery of landscapes.
- respondents assessed architecture, interesting museum expositions, castles, chateaux and traditional folk villages at a good level
- created resources were assessed less competitive than endowed ones
- transportation in bigger towns were assessed as satisfactory, however the bus and train service to the small locations and to the historical and natural sites located outside towns are very limited and inadequate according to stakeholders' perception
- accommodation and food services are available in a large quantity, nevertheless the quality of the services is worst
- tourism information was evaluated in a sufficient quality, local people know exactly where to find information centre in their home place and which websites to visit if they need more information
- people agreed that information on websites operate in good quality and with today's technology should not be hard to find all necessary information tourists need for their trips
- on the other hand, people perceived that there is lack of information in English language at hotels and restaurants
- respondents appreciated the construction of new cycle path
- relaxing activities, activities connected with culture and/or sports activities were among those respondents would recommend to tourists in Zlín region
- shopping was not assessed as a strong indicator in this region
- the level of entertainment's quality and variety was assessed as average with few interesting things taking place in a certain time of the year, but stakeholders perceived that compare to others regions, the level of entertainment is rather behind

- there were assessed six main events and festivals that attract local people as well as tourists to the region, nevertheless residents would appreciate more of these throughout the year
- stakeholders perceived that Zlín region needs more promotion, unique and specific tourism products, better language skills of people working in tourism sector and sectors related to tourism, such as restaurants. This region also needs to improve infrastructure and organise more cultural activities

The findings of this study are hard to compare to others as most of the papers focus on assessing the overall Inherited model of destination competitiveness and most of them do not pay attention to particular region of the country. Due to the complexity of the model and the fact that assessing some of its indicators (for instance destination management) would be impossible for local people, the researcher decided to follow the “*soft*” indicators in accordance with Dwyer and Kim (2003). Attention was focused on Endowed and Created resources.

Nevertheless some findings are consistent with those by Armenski et al. (2011). Armenski et al. (2011) conduct a researcher in order to find the weak point of Serbia as a competitive tourism destination against its main competitors. It was found out that Serbia is more competitive in its endowment resources compare to the created resources (Armenski et al., 2011). Furthermore, Gomezelj and Mihalič (2008) find out that in case of destination competitiveness of Slovenia, the entertainment factor, especially nightlife, was not rated as competitive. However, the tourism infrastructure was perceived as competitive factor.

#### **5.4 Differences in stakeholders’ perception of various aspects of Zlín region as an international tourist destination**

Some differences in various stakeholders’ perceptions were discovered according to the in-depth interview. This section provides answer to the second research objective in the summary form.

- in the opening question, stakeholders provided evidence that no matter from which part of the region the participants are, or what is their age or job position, they all have clear idea about attributes that differentiate this region and make it interesting
- towards the natural resources, local people lack of information about uniqueness of flora and fauna in this region compare to experts and they claimed that the awareness should

be higher due to the fact that some residents had problem to recall any specific natural scenery

- respondents first recalled cultural and heritage sites which are in or closest to their hometown
- local people and experts chose the same range of activities they would recommend to global tourists
- it was found out that experts perceived the quality of entertainment higher than local people and younger people (age 23-30) assessed the nightlife in the region as very poor
- six main events and festivals were perceived by each respondent as the most interesting ones. Local people living in villages named other small events mainly based on the folklore traditions taking place in their hometown or nearby places, but overall experts were able to name more events and festivals than residents
- when rating several factors on the 5-point scale the biggest differences were seen in terms of assessing the range of shopping possibilities, the range of possible activities in the region and the level of entertainment between local people and experts
- local people perceived the attractiveness of local traditions as the most attractive factor in Zlín region followed by the attractiveness of natural resources
- the lowest rating was assigned to the level of entertainment, followed by the quality of local transport
- experts perceived the attractiveness of natural resources and the historic/heritage sites as well as the range of possible activities as the highest competitive factor in Zlín region
- the quality of local transport, followed by the quality of restaurant services was rated as the lowest competitive factor by experts
- overall, experts provided deeper knowledge of factors determining the destination competitiveness in the area than local people which the researcher seen as expected result according to their position related to the tourism in Zlín region

## 6 RECOMMENDATION

This chapter deals with the third objective proposed for the purpose of this thesis “*to provide recommendation that can help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination.*” The recommendation will be based on the outcomes of the interviews.

1. Tourism can bring benefits to the place by enhancing economic development and employment as well as bring higher profit to the business (Jackson, 2006; Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). To become more competitive as an international tourist destination could be surely beneficial for any country and its region. Nevertheless, each destination should firstly start to convince their local people about its competitiveness. As Morrison (2013, p. 224) points out, residents use local facilities and services and so that they can share their positive or negative experience with tourists. They can give advice on where to go, what to see, do and eat in the area and to bring their friends and relatives to visit the attraction or restaurants which they perceive as quality ones in the area. In the case of Zlín region, local people assessed the endowed resources as more competitive factor than created resources. Mainly tourism infrastructure, shopping and entertainment were seen as a weak point. In addition, it was found out that local people do not have much knowledge about several natural and cultural sites and activities taking place in the region as experts have. It is essential to provide local people more direct information, convince them to use more activities the region offers and travel to different parts of the region to acknowledge more nature and heritage sites as well as cultural activities.
2. Improve infrastructure as its lack can have negative effect on the quality and perception of the destination. Created resources represent the opportunity for achieving competitive advantage. There should be more pressure on the restaurants’ and hotels’ providers to offer services that are quality and sufficient. The restaurants should respect the region’s traditions and specialty. Provide better transport service from main routes to natural and cultural sites which are not located directly in bigger towns.
3. Make sure that the created resources become as competitive as the endowed resources by continuously improving services, activities of the region etc.
4. Provide a specific package of tourism products which can be presented in Prague where most of the international tourists arrive. Focus on promoting the rural tourism, cultural tourism and activities connected with sports and relaxation. There could be package tour connected with sports activities which would provide foreign tourists trip where would

be possibility to cycle, hike, ride a horse and/or to take a cruise on Baťa canal on the river Morava. Another package tour could provide holidays connected with cultural activities, such as exploring folklore traditions with tasting of traditional local delicacies, visiting museums, architecture, and heritage sites. Try to find and target those countries whose residents are interested in these types of products.

5. Using more promotion on social media sites, for instance facebook, in the English language. The website analysis as well as the interview process found out that Zlín region has very active facebook profile, but only in the Czech language. The social media are an important source of information influencing travel plans of several tourists nowadays. The World travel trends report (ITB, 2012) finds out that more than 50 % of travellers based their holidays on experiences of other people posted on social media sites in 2012. Social media are powerful tool and it could be useful if Zlín region provides the same active facebook profile in the English language that it provides in Czech language. Consumers could share their pictures, videos, opinions and experiences which might help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination.



## 7 CONCLUSION

Tourism is an important and fast growing industry around the world. More and more people travel every year and mainly due to the increasing globalisation, destinations all around the world are becoming more competitive. However, it has been noticed that visitors mostly come to the country to see well-known attractions and due to this, a large number of regional towns and villages are unfamiliar to the world despite their large tourism potential. Nevertheless, not many studies have been conducted towards tourism in a particular region. In the Czech Republic, the capital city Prague largely dominates as an international tourism destination with 65.1 % of international guests. Most of the other regions are not significantly popular among foreign tourists. One of these is Zlín region.

As the researcher saw a gap in the literature and potential of Zlín region to develop itself as an international tourism destination, the aim of this study was to identify the fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlín region from the different perspectives of its stakeholders. Based on this, three objectives were proposed. Each of these objectives tried to be answered through the literature review and analysis of findings from the chosen data collection method: semi-structured interview. Brief summary of each research objectives is provided in this section.

- **to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlin region**

The appropriate theoretical framework for assessing the destination competitiveness of Zlín region was chosen as a result of the comprehensive literature review. The researcher decided to follow the “*Integrated model of destination competitiveness*” proposed by Dwyer and Kim mainly due to the reason that this model can be used to assess competitiveness of certain groups of its determinants. It is also suitable for identifying the destination competitiveness of a whole country as well as its regions. The “soft” indicators were selected. According to these, the destination can be measured subjectively (“*soft measures*”), such as cultural or natural attractiveness and/or quality of services provided to visitors. Attention was focused on Endowed and Created resources. These factors were chosen because its responses are not entirely depending on the deep knowledge of respondents and so that there can be easily answered by local people.

- **to investigate how different stakeholders perceive various aspects of Zlín region as an international tourist destination**

Author has decided to concentrate its work on perception of local people as well as people in managing positions related to the tourism in Zlín region due to the belief that these stakeholders can provide depth insight into the destination competitiveness. In-depth interview was used for collecting primary data.

First of all, the researcher focused on overall assessment of Zlín competitiveness as a tourist destination and identifying the fundamental factors that determine its destination competitiveness. It was found out that endowed resources are perceived more competitive than created resources. Respondents appreciated the beauty of the nature, the greenery of landscapes with woods, unique architecture, dynamics Moravian traditions and peaceful and pleasant environment for living in Zlín region. On the other hand, the tourism infrastructure, mainly transportation, accommodation and restaurant services were assessed as very low competitive factors. In addition, the shopping possibilities as well as the level of entertainment were not perceived as strong factors.

Some differences in various stakeholders' perceptions were discovered in the interviews. Mainly, local people lack of information in certain areas. For instance in case of the natural resources, local people lack of information about uniqueness of flora and fauna in this region compare to experts and they claimed that the awareness should be higher. There is a low awareness of some festivals and events which take place during the whole year among local people. Respondents first recalled cultural and heritage sites which are in or closest to their hometown. Young people assessed the level of entertainment, especially the nightlife as very poor.

Local people perceived the attractiveness of local traditions as the most attractive factor in the region and the lowest rating was assigned to the level of entertainment.

Experts perceived the attractiveness of natural resources and historic/heritage sites as well as the range of possible activities as the highest competitive factor in Zlín region. The quality of local transport was rate as the lowest competitive factor by experts.

- **to provide recommendation that can help Zlin region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination**

The researcher made an effort to provide recommendation that could help Zlín region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination based on the outcomes of interviews.

Firstly, it is essential to provide local people more direct information, convince them to use more activities the region offers and travel to different parts of the region to acknowledge more nature and heritage sites as well as cultural activities. Residents use local facilities and services and because of that they can share their positive or negative experiences with tourists. Due to this fact it is important that each destination firstly convince their local people about its competitiveness.

Secondly, improvement towards infrastructure should be made. There should be more pressure to restaurants' and hotels' providers to offer services that are quality and sufficient. The restaurants should respect the region's traditions and specialty. Provide better transport service from main routes to natural and cultural sites which are not located directly in bigger towns.

After that the created resources should become as competitive as the endowed resources by continuously improving services, activities of the region etc.

Finally, Zlín region should focus on providing specific package of tourism products which can be presented in Prague where most international tourists arrive. The region could also use more promotion on social media sites, for instance facebook, in English language because the social media are an important source of information influencing travel plans of several tourists nowadays.

This study was focused on assessing Zlín region as an international tourist destination due to the fact that researcher saw a weak point in convincing more foreign tourists to visit another sites of the Czech Republic and not only the capital city Prague. However, results of this study can also be beneficial to attract more domestic tourists to the region.

The researcher believes that this study made contributions from the practical as well as the academic point of view. From the practical point of view, it provided a set of possible driving forces that could bring higher tourist attention to the Zlín region. From the academic point of view, it offered new insight into the competitiveness of tourism destination based on the novel research context of Zlín. There is a lack of attention towards competitiveness in certain regions, particularly in the Czech Republic in the previous studies. This study tried to fill this gap, nevertheless, there can be still improvement in a future research.

### **Recommendation for the future research**

The researcher provided limitation of this study in the research methodology section. As it was beyond researcher possibility due to the limitation of time and resources, the sample size is limited and due to that more stakeholders could be included in the future study.

In addition, only two groups of the proposed model were selected for the purpose of this research due to the complexity of chosen model. The future study could focus on assessing other groups of the Dwyer and Kim's model or even using this model as a whole to assess and compare all determinants of the destination competitiveness in Zlín region.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Overview of proposed models of destination competitiveness

Author	Title	Year	Journal	Key indicators of destination competitiveness
<u>Poon, A.</u>	Tourism, Technology, and Competitive Strategy	1993	Book	Put the environment first; make tourism a leading sector; strengthen the distribution channels in the market place; build a dynamic private sector
<u>Crouch, G. I. and Ritchie, J.R.B.</u>	Tourism, competitiveness, and societal prosperity	1999	Journal of Business research	Supporting factors & resources; core resources & attractors; destination management; destination policy, planning & development; qualifying & amplifying determinants
<u>Kozak, M. and Rimmington, M.</u>	Measuring tourist destination competitiveness: conceptual considerations and empirical findings	1999	International Journal of Hospitality management	Destinations should focused on a) primary factors (climate, culture) b) specific factors (hotels, transport)
<u>Go, F. M., and Govers, R.</u>	The Asian perspective: Which international conference destinations in Asia are the most competitive?	1999	Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management	Identify importance of following determinants: availability of hotel rooms; distance of hotels from meeting sites; service at hotel; hotel room rates; economy of destination; climate; entertainment features of destination
<u>Hassan, S. S.</u>	Determinants of market competitiveness in an environmentally sustainable tourism industry	2000	Journal of Travel research	Comparative advantage; demand orientation; environmental commitment; industry structure

Heath, E.	Towards a Model to Enhance Destination Competitiveness: A Southern African Perspective	2003	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism management	The foundation; the cement; the building blocks; the key success drivers; the tourism script
Dwyer, L. & Kim, Ch.	Destination competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators	2003	Current issues in tourism	Inherited resources; created resources; supporting factors and resources; destination management; situational conditions; demand conditions
Melián-González, A. & García-Falcon, J. M	Competitive potential of tourism in destinations	2003	Annals of tourism research	Model focused on the natural resources (beach or mountains) and cultural resource (festivals, museums)
Enright M. J. & Newton, J.	Tourism destination competitiveness: A quantitative approach	2004	Tourism management	<b>Major Drivers:</b> Inputs; Industrial & Consumer Demand; Inter-firm Competition & Cooperation; Industrial & Regional Clustering; Internal Organisation & Strategy of Firms; Institutions, Social Structures and Agendas <b>Additional Drivers:</b> Tourism Business Superstructure; market Ties
Johns, N. & Mattsson, J.	Destination development through entrepreneurship: a comparison of two cases	2005	Tourism management	The competitiveness of destinations measured according to quantitative measurements (number of tourist arrivals and their revenues)
WEF.	The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness report 2013	2013b	The World Economic Forum	Policy rules and regulations; environmental sustainability; safety and security; health and hygiene; prioritization of Travel & Tourism; air transport infrastructure; ground transport infrastructure; tour-

				ism infrastructure; ICT infrastructure; price competitiveness in the T&T industry; human resources ; affinity for Travel & Tourism; natural resources; cultural resources
<u>Dupeyras, A. &amp; MacCallum, N.</u>	Indicators for Measuring Competitiveness in Tourism: A Guidance Document	2013	OECD Tourism Papers	Core indicators; supplementary indicators; future development indicators

Source: On the researcher's own supported by listed literature

**Appendix 2 Selected indicators of destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003)**

<i>Endowed Resources</i>
<p><i>Natural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Comfortable climate for tourism</li> <li>ˆ Cleanliness/Sanitation</li> <li>ˆ Natural wonders/Scenery</li> <li>ˆ Flora and fauna</li> <li>ˆ Unspoiled nature</li> <li>ˆ National parks/Nature reserves</li> </ul>
<p><i>Culture/Heritage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Historic/Heritage sites and museums</li> <li>ˆ Artistic/Architectural features</li> <li>ˆ Traditional arts</li> <li>ˆ Variety of cuisine</li> <li>ˆ Cultural precincts and (folk) villages</li> </ul>
<i>Created Resources</i>
<p><i>Tourism infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Accommodation quality/variety</li> <li>ˆ Airport efficiency/quality</li> <li>ˆ Tourist guidance/information</li> <li>ˆ Local transport efficiency/quality</li> <li>ˆ Visitor accessibility to natural areas</li> <li>ˆ Convention/Exhibition facilities (capacity/quality)</li> <li>ˆ Food services quality/variety</li> </ul>
<p><i>Range of activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Water based</li> <li>ˆ Nature based</li> <li>ˆ Adventure activities</li> <li>ˆ Recreation facilities</li> <li>ˆ Sports facilities</li> </ul>
<p><i>Shopping</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Variety of shopping items</li> <li>ˆ Quality of shopping facilities</li> <li>ˆ Quality of shopping items</li> <li>ˆ Value for money of shopping items</li> <li>ˆ Diversity of shopping experiences</li> </ul>
<p><i>Entertainment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Amusement/Theme parks</li> <li>ˆ Entertainment quality/variety</li> <li>ˆ Nightlife</li> </ul>
<i>Special events/festivals</i>

<i>Supporting Factors</i>
<p><i>General infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitor needs</li> <li>ˆ Health/Medical facilities to serve tourists</li> <li>ˆ Financial institution and currency exchange facilities</li> <li>ˆ Telecommunication system for tourists</li> <li>ˆ Security/safety for visitors</li> <li>ˆ Local transport systems</li> <li>ˆ Waste disposal</li> <li>ˆ Electricity supply</li> </ul>
<p><i>Quality of service</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Tourism/Hospitality firms which have well defined performance standards in service delivery</li> <li>ˆ Firms have programmes to ensure/monitor visitor satisfaction</li> <li>ˆ Visitor satisfaction with quality of service</li> <li>ˆ Industry appreciation of importance of service quality</li> <li>ˆ Development of training programmes to enhance quality of service</li> <li>ˆ Speed/Delays through customs/immigration</li> <li>ˆ Attitudes of customs/immigration officials</li> </ul>
<p><i>Accessibility of destination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Distance/Flying time to destination from key origins</li> <li>ˆ Direct/Indirect flights to destination</li> <li>ˆ Ease/Cost of obtaining entry visa</li> <li>ˆ Ease of combining travel to destination with travel to other destinations</li> <li>ˆ Frequency/Capacity of access transport to destination</li> </ul>
<p><i>Hospitality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Friendliness of residents towards tourists</li> <li>ˆ Existence of resident hospitality development programmes</li> <li>ˆ Resident support for tourism industry</li> <li>ˆ Ease of communication between tourists and residents</li> </ul>
<p><i>Market ties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Business ties/trade links with major tourist origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Sporting links with major tourist origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Ethnic ties with major tourist origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Religious ties with major tourist origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry</li> </ul>

<p><i>Destination Management</i></p>
<p><i>Destination management organisation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ NTO acts as coordinating body for private and public sector tourism organisations</li> <li>ˆ NTO effectively represents views of all tourism stakeholders in tourism development</li> <li>ˆ NTO liaises effectively with private sector in tourism policy, planning and development</li> <li>ˆ NTO provides statistical information as input to tourism policy, planning and development</li> <li>ˆ NTO strategically monitors and evaluates the nature and type of tourism development</li> </ul>
<p><i>Destination marketing management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Reputation of NTO</li> <li>ˆ Effectiveness of destination positioning</li> <li>ˆ Strength/Clarity of destination image</li> <li>ˆ Efficient monitoring of destination marketing activities</li> <li>ˆ Effective packaging of destination experiences</li> <li>ˆ Links between destination tourism organisations and travel trade</li> <li>ˆ NTO identification of target markets</li> <li>ˆ NTO strategic alliances with other NTO</li> <li>ˆ Destination marketing is based on knowledge of competitor products</li> <li>ˆ Present 'fit' between destination products and visitor preferences</li> </ul>
<p><i>Destination policy, planning, development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Existence of formal long-term 'vision' for tourism industry development</li> <li>ˆ Destination 'vision' reflects resident values</li> <li>ˆ Destination 'vision' reflects tourism industry stakeholder values</li> <li>ˆ Tourism policy conforms to a formal destination 'vision'</li> <li>ˆ Tourism planning and development conforms to a formal destination 'vision'</li> <li>ˆ Tourism development is integrated into overall industrial development</li> <li>ˆ Ongoing tourism development is responsive to visitor needs</li> <li>ˆ Extent to which research findings are integrated into tourism planning and development</li> <li>ˆ Inventory of most significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in destination</li> <li>ˆ Identification of major competitors and their product offerings</li> <li>ˆ Community support for special events</li> </ul>
<p><i>Human resource development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Public sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training</li> <li>ˆ Private sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training</li> <li>ˆ Training/education responsive to changing visitor needs</li> <li>ˆ Range/quality of tourism/hospitality training programmes</li> </ul>

<p><i>Environmental management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Public-sector recognition of importance of ‘sustainable’ tourism development</li> <li>ˆ Private sector recognition of importance of ‘sustainable’ tourism development</li> <li>ˆ Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage</li> <li>ˆ Research and monitoring of environmental impacts of tourism</li> </ul>
<p><i>Situational Conditions</i></p>
<p><i>Competitive (micro) environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Domestic business environment in destination</li> <li>ˆ Management capabilities of tourism firms and organisations</li> <li>ˆ Extent of competitive rivalry between firms in domestic tourism industry</li> <li>ˆ Level of cooperation between firms in destination tourism industry</li> <li>ˆ Links between tourism/hospitality firms and firms in other industrial sectors</li> <li>ˆ Entrepreneurial Qualities of local tourism stakeholders</li> <li>ˆ Access to venture capital</li> <li>ˆ Tourism/hospitality firms operate in ethical manner</li> <li>ˆ Firms use computer technology /commerce to achieve competitive advantage</li> </ul>
<p><i>Destination location</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Perceived ‘exoticness’ of location</li> <li>ˆ Proximity to other destinations</li> <li>ˆ Distance from major origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Travel time from major origin markets</li> </ul>
<p><i>Global (macro) environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ The global business context</li> <li>ˆ Political stability</li> <li>ˆ Legal/Regulatory environment</li> <li>ˆ Government policies for tourism development</li> <li>ˆ Economic conditions in origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Sociocultural environment</li> <li>ˆ Investment environment for tourism development</li> <li>ˆ Technology changes</li> </ul>
<p><i>Price competitiveness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Value for money in destination tourism</li> <li>ˆ Exchange rate</li> <li>ˆ Air ticket prices from major origin markets</li> <li>ˆ Accommodation prices</li> <li>ˆ Destination package tour prices</li> <li>ˆ Price of destination visit relative to competitor destinations</li> </ul>
<p><i>Safety/Security</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Level of visitor safety in destination</li> <li>ˆ Incidence of crimes against tourists in destination</li> </ul>



<i>Demand Factors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Destination awareness</li> <li>ˆ Destination perception</li> <li>ˆ Destination preferences</li> </ul>
<i>Market Performance Indicators</i>
<i>Visitor statistics (numbers)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Number of foreign visitors</li> <li>ˆ Growth rate of foreign visitors</li> <li>ˆ Market share of destination – world, regional</li> <li>ˆ Shifts in market share</li> <li>ˆ Average length of stay</li> <li>ˆ Rate of revisit</li> </ul>
<i>Visitor statistics (expenditure)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Expenditure of foreign visitors (FX receipts)</li> <li>ˆ Growth rate of expenditure of foreign visitors</li> <li>ˆ Share of destination in total tourism expenditure – world, regional</li> <li>ˆ Shifts in expenditure share</li> <li>ˆ Foreign exchange earnings from tourism as percentage of total exports</li> </ul>
<i>Contribution of tourism to economy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Contribution of tourism to value added (absolute values and percentages, and rate of growth)</li> <li>ˆ Domestic tourism</li> <li>ˆ International tourism</li> <li>ˆ Contribution of tourism to employment (absolute numbers; percentage of total employment and rate of growth)</li> <li>ˆ Domestic tourism</li> <li>ˆ International tourism</li> <li>ˆ Productivity of tourism industry sectors</li> </ul>
<i>Indicators of economic prosperity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Aggregate levels of employment</li> <li>ˆ Rate of economic growth</li> <li>ˆ Per capita income</li> </ul>
<i>Tourism investment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Investment in tourism industry from domestic sources</li> <li>ˆ Foreign direct investment in tourism industry</li> <li>ˆ Investment in tourism as percentage of total industry investment (and trend)</li> </ul>
<i>Price competitiveness indices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Aggregate price competitiveness indices</li> <li>ˆ By journey purpose</li> <li>ˆ By tourism sector</li> </ul>
<i>Government support for tourism</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ˆ Budget for tourism ministry</li> <li>ˆ Budget for NTO</li> <li>ˆ NTO expenditure on destination marketing (comparison with competitors)</li> <li>ˆ Support for transport infrastructure</li> <li>ˆ Industry programmes accessed by tourism industry</li> <li>ˆ Tax concessions</li> <li>ˆ Subsidies to industry</li> <li>ˆ Export marketing assistance</li> <li>ˆ Vocational education skills/ training for tourism industry</li> </ul>

Source: Dwyer & Kim, 2003, p. 400-405

### **Appendix 3 Outline of the interview schedule**

Good morning,

thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This interview is designed to collect primary data for the purpose of completing MSc. Dissertation at the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom. The aim of this dissertation is to identify fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlin region from different stakeholders` view. In other words, this dissertation tries to assess the competitiveness of Zlín region as an international tourist destination. This is therefore the researcher discovers that most of the regions in the Czech Republic are not significantly popular among foreign tourists. Also there is a lack of attention towards competitiveness of particular region in previous studies what the researcher sees as a gap in the literature.

This interview is semi-structure and it is based on your opinions connected with competitiveness of Zlín region.

This interview is completely anonymous (no name or job position will be used in the data analysis) and its data will be used only for the purpose of the thesis. If you find any question uncomfortable you have the right to refuse it. Do you understand and agree with the ethics of this research?

#### **1. How do you like Zlín region?**

*Possible probing questions:*

Why you like or do not like this region, what would you change?

#### **2. Is there anything interesting about this region?**

Possible probing questions:

Why not, Why yes (develop conversation in order to explain further)

How does it differ from other regions?

#### **3. What do you think about natural resources in Zlín region?**

*Possible probing questions:*

Namely, which ones do you considered attractive, what would you change?

#### **4. What do you think about cultural and heritage sites in Zlín region?**

*Possible probing questions:*

Namely which ones do you considered attractive, what would you change?

#### **5. What do you think about the infrastructure in Zlín region?**

*Possible probing questions:*

What do you think about transportation services around this region?

What do you think about the accommodation?

What do you think about restaurant services?

What do you think about accessibility of tourist information?

**6. Which activities would you recommend to international tourists in Zlín region?**

**7. What do you think about shopping possibilities in Zlín region?**

*Possible probing question:*

Do you think shopping possibilities could be interesting for visitors?

What do you think about the possibilities to buy traditional local products?

**8. What do you think about the level of entertainment this region can offer?**

**9. What do you think about special events/festivals in the region?**

*Possible probing question:*

Which one are interested for you?

Which one could be interested for tourists?

**10. What in your opinion could increase the arrival of global tourists to Zlín region?**

**11. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?**

Thank you very much for yours answers. At the end I would like to ask you to complete this additional website link (<http://41802.vyplnto.cz> – link sent to local people; <http://atraktivita-zlinskeho-kraje.vyplnto.cz>. – link sent to experts, this links are not longer active due to the fact that this research was finished). It should not take you longer than 3 minutes to complete this small questionnaire.

How do you rate these factors in Zlín region according to its quality and attractiveness on a 5-point scale (1 = the best, 5 = the worst)?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. attractiveness of natural resources        | 8. quality of accommodation                     |
| 2. cleanness of the destination               | 9. quality of restaurants services              |
| 3. attractiveness of historic/heritage sites  | 10. quality of information provided to tourists |
| 4. level of interesting museums and galleries | 11. range of possible activities                |
| 5. attractiveness of local traditions         | 12. range of shopping possibilities             |
| 6. attractiveness of local cuisine            | 13. level of entertainment                      |
| 7. quality of local transport                 | 14. attractiveness of events/festivals          |

Thank you for your help.

## Appendix 4 Ethical form

### THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD Business School

#### STUDENT PROJECT / DISSERTATION ETHICAL REVIEW

APPLICABLE TO ALL UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Please complete and return via email to your Project / Dissertation Supervisor along with the required documents (shown below)

#### SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT

Before completing this section please refer to the Business School Research Ethics web pages which can be found at xxxx. Students should consult the appropriate ethical guidelines. The student's supervisor is responsible for advising the student on appropriate professional judgement in this review.

Please ensure that the statements in Section C are completed by the student and supervisor prior to submission.

Project Title:	Tourism destination competitiveness: The case study of Zlin region (The Czech Republic)
Student:	Veronika Ancincova
Student number:	U1371781
Course:	MSc International Business management
Supervisor:	Sabrina Thornton
Project start date	26 May 2014

#### SECTION B: PROJECT OUTLINE (TO BE COMPLETED IN FULL BY THE STUDENT)

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for your supervisor to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal
<b>Aim / objectives of the study</b> These need to be clearly stated and in accord with the title of the study. (Sensitive subject areas which might involve distress to the participants will be referred to the Course Approval Panel).	The aim of this dissertation is to identify the fundamental factors that determine the destination competitiveness of Zlin region from different stakeholders' view.  The main research objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to identify appropriate framework of destination competitiveness of Zlin region</li> <li>to investigate how different stakeholders perceive various aspects of Zlin region as an international tourist destination</li> <li>to provide recommendation that can help Zlin region to become more competitive as an international tourist destination</li> </ul>
<b>Brief overview of research methodology</b> The methodology only needs to be explained in sufficient detail to show the approach used (e.g. survey) and explain the research methods to be used during the study.	The research design will be case study approach.  Qualitative methods to generate primary data will be used.  The data will be collected through interview method.
<b>Does your study require any permissions for study?</b> If so, please give details	No.
<b>Participants</b> Please outline who will participate in your research. If your research involves vulnerable groups (e.g. children, adults with learning disabilities), it must be referred to the Course Assessment Panel.	Participants in this research will be local people in the Zlin region and experts in positions related to tourism in Zlin region.
<b>Access to participants</b> Please give details about how participants will be identified and contacted.	Participants will be identified according to their suitability to this research (that means local people in the Zlin region and experts in positions related to tourism in Zlin region). Participants will be contacted via e-mail and social media sites in order to be invited to participate in this research.

<b>How will your data be recorded and stored?</b>	notes in documents, stored in a personal computer.
<b>Confidentiality</b> Please outline the level of confidentiality you will offer respondents and how this will be respected. You should also outline about who will have access to the data and how it will be stored. (This should be included on information sheet.)	This research is anonymous and the data will be used only for the purpose of this dissertation.
<b>Anonymity</b> Do you intend to offer anonymity? If so, please indicate how this will be achieved.	All participants will be ensured that taking part in this research is anonymous and no participants' name or job positions will be used in the dissertation in order to offer anonymity.
<b>Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in normal life).</b> If yes, you should outline what support there will be for participants.	No.

**SECTION C – SUMMARY OF ETHICAL ISSUES (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)**

Please give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address the issue(s).

To participate in this research is voluntary and no participant is forced to take part in this research. This research is anonymous and the data will be used only for the purpose of the dissertation. No sensitive questions will be asked, however, any participant has the right to refuse any question which he/she feels uncomfortable with. All participants will be informed about the purpose of this research.

**SECTION D – ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)**

Please supply to your supervisors copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy

I have included the following documents

- |                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Information sheet  | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Consent form       | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Letters            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Questionnaire      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Interview schedule | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**SECTION E – STATEMENT BY STUDENT**

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I confirm that the information I have given in this form on ethical issues is correct.

Signature Ancincova

Date: 29/08/2014

**Affirmation by Supervisor**

I have read the Ethical Review Checklist and I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by the student is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgement on whether further ethical approval is required

Signature V. White

Date: 30/07/2014

**SECTION F: SUPERVISOR RECOMMENDATION ON THE PROJECT'S ETHICAL STATUS**

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Having satisfied myself of the accuracy of the project's ethical statement, I believe that the appropriate action is:

The project proceeds in its present form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The project proposal needs further assessment under the appropriate Course Approval Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>
The project needs to be returned to the student for modification prior to further action	<input type="checkbox"/>

All documentation must be submitted to the Course Department Office.