

Outlet centre as a potential development impulse: a case study of the municipality of Voderady

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Abstract: The paper is focused on residents' perception of the newly established outlet centre located at the peripheral zone of the selected village. In the first part is a summarized theoretical aspect and literary source that is dedicated to the matter of interest with an emphasis on realized studies in Slovak and Czech geographical areas. Subsequently, the area of interest is picked up from various points of view, whereas the attention is concentrated on the main location conditions of placement of the target shopping destination. The core of the paper lies in the interpretation of the field survey results through which the features of the outlet center presence was researched. The obtained data is evaluated and synthesized using the Likert scale. Based on that are identified positive and negative aspects that the outlet centre has brought to the common population of rural settlements.

Key-Words: shopping tourism, outlet center, rural area, Voderady

Introduction

For a society of today, free time activities are tantamount and essential components of lives, as much as work and accommodation [1, 2]. Amusement, adventure and consumption have significantly become the initiators of interconnections between tourism and retail, what has resulted into the formation of shopping tourism. Shopping as an activity is not just the way of acquiring basic conditions for life, but the form of pleasure, as well.

For the satisfaction of needs to experience shopping, big shopping malls were created (for business and societal utilization) located at the outskirts of cities. There were many times the mean of revitalization of urban centers. Outlet centers also belong to shopping venues, where experience shopping runs because of their special large-scale form of retail. Within the term of goods, there are mostly offered fashion clothes and related accessories.

The first outlet centre was established in Pennsylvania in 1971. In 1995, there were 324 outlet centers in the USA, which represented that the market was fully covered. This phenomenon also came to Europe, but it took some time, whereas the first outlet store was opened in France in 1984.

An aggrandizement of this shopping destination affected the Slovak Republic in 2013, when the first

outlet centre in the municipality of Voderady was opened. Its establishment was supported by positive experiences from outlet centers in Parndorf (Austria), which has become a long-term favorite shopping destination for customers coming from Slovakia. This form of retail has been brought to the Slovak population, but there is an assumption of captivation of some Austrian clients because of the restrictions that influence shopping facilities. The investment in Voderady has brought for inhabitants new experiences that are the matter of interest of this paper.

Many experts have mostly focused on research of development processes in urban areas. Among Slovak geographers, Trembošová [3], Trembošová and Tremboš [4] concentrated on the influence of retail on the improvement of urban features in the city of Nitra. Križan [5], Križan and Lauko [6], Križan and Bilková [7] paid their attention on retail relations in the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava. The connections within retail and their changes in area of the biggest cities in Eastern Slovakia (Prešov, Košice) were researched by Ferťalová [8] and Mitriková [9]. An impact of services and retail on rural hinterland of Bratislava was studied mostly by Lauko [10, 11], Lauko, Križan and Tolmáči [12]. The topic of features of shopping tourism between Slovakia and Austria and the example of the outlet center in Parndorf was the matter of research by

Civáň and Krogmann [13]. The geographers from Czech Republic explored mostly important regional city centers. The retail network of Brno was researched by Muliček [14] and Kunc [15], whereas Szczyrba [16] paid attention on retail equipment of Olomouc. In consequent study, Kunc [17] concentrated on both of the mentioned cities and focused on shopping habits of the population. The complex study of retail presented Szczyrba [18] and Spilková [19], whereas Szczyrba, Fiedor and Kunc [20] devoted their research to retail and its position in the Czech countryside.

Trembošová [21] and Civáň [22] also pointed out many interconnections between two related branches (tourism and retail) that are very significant in our current society.

Material and Methods

The area of interest

The target area, where the field survey was realized, was the municipality of Voderady, which belongs from administrative point of view to the Region of Trnava (NUTS III level) and the District of Trnava (LAU I level). The number of inhabitants reached 1,424 people up to December 31, 2013[23]. Hence it belongs to the group of medium-sized rural settlements.

The accessibility is a very important element within the terms of localization of the outlet center for its potential customers. The most remarkable city is Bratislava (the distance takes 48 km using the D1 highway), but the selected shopping destination can be accessed from other regional city centers (Trnava, Trenčín, Žilina). Other potential clients may use the R1 expressway that connects cities from Banská Bystrica to Nitra and accesses the D1 highway near Trnava.

Methodology

The field research of inhabitants' perception of the outlet center was realized through a questionnaire survey during one day in the mentioned municipality. Švec [24] states that it is a research method used mostly for collective and relatively quick ascertaining of information about opinions, attitudes and findings of respondents to current or prospective reality. The identification of attitudes of the population living in the municipality of Voderady to the newly established outlet center in the peripheral zone was the aim of the presented survey. Ritomský [25] presents that formation of questionnaire and particular questions play a key role within this method of obtaining data. It was necessary to follow principles known from theory and praxis of empirical researches. The mentioned

principles and facts are connected not only with the content, but also with the need of brief, obvious and understandable form of expressing the opinions. There is an interference point with the design of a questionnaire and principles of the questions' creation, such as completeness and unambiguity. The length of an interview and a workload of the interviewer in the area were other important features we need to pay attention to. The importance of a questionnaire and its consequent utilization is mentioned in studies made by Veselovský [26, 27, 28].

The questionnaire that the respondents faced is compiled from two main sections. The first one is focused on the identification of basic facts about respondents (sex, age, marital status, level of education, economic activity, monthly income and the length of dwelling in the municipality) and consisted just from closed-ended questions. The second part of the questionnaire was dedicated to obtaining attitudes of respondents to the mentioned outlet center. We used the Likert scale, which is considered as the one of the most used and reliable techniques in this way. The Likert scale consists of particular statements and there are five possible answers (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) for respondents, but each of them can pick only one answer for one question. To identify respondents on the scale were formed these 15 confrontational statements (abbr. S):

- S1: Location of the outlet centre has helped publicize the municipality within the region.
- S2: The outlet center has brought jobs mostly for inhabitants of the municipality.
- S3: The land, where the outlet center is located, could be used more effectively for agriculture.
- S4: The outlet center has caused the increase of traffic in the municipality.
- S5: The outlet center has caused the increase of waste in the municipality.
- S6: The prices of land, goods and services has become higher because of presence of the outlet center.
- S7: The attendance of municipality of visitors from neighboring Slovak regions has rose after opening of the outlet center.
- S8: The municipality economically prospers from the presence of the outlet center.
- S9: The outlet center can pull more investors to the municipality or adjacent region in the future.
- S10: The outlet center actively cooperates in the municipal events (e.g. cultural, sport events, etc.).
- S11: The outlet center is mostly used by tourists and not by inhabitants of the municipality.

S12: I am used to choosing the outlet centre for spending my free time.

S13: The outlet center will be prospering and developing in the future.

S14: I consider the location of the outlet centre in the municipality as a mistake.

S15: The presence of the outlet centre has raised my patriotism to the municipality.

The final evaluation of the Likert scale was realized through the marking of the questions of every respondent. Each of the statements got a number of points (from 1 to 5) and their sum displayed the total score of each interviewed person. In this case, the man, who reached the minimal number of points (15) was extremely positive to the presence of the outlet centre. On the other hand, a respondent that acquired 75 (100%) points presented a strongly negative feeling to the outlet centre. All of the respondents were divided into 5 categories that showed their attitude to the outlet centre in general. Based on that, it can be distinguished as very positive (0–20% of total points), positive (21–40%), neutral (41–60%), negative (61–80%) and very negative (81–100%) attitude.

Results and Discussion

The researched sample consisted of 85 random respondents. Within the light of their basic information and structure, men (54) predominated over women (31). In terms of age structure can be summarized that our sample mainly copies a structure of the whole population. More than 75% of

the people asked have been living in the municipality 15 years or longer. From the educational point of view, predominated respondents reached a secondary level of education.

The questions especially focused on the perception of the outlet center brought, in many cases, visible differences. The statement referred to publicity and propagation of the municipality was due to the outlet center belonging to the group of declarations that reached the majority share of agreement. More than 80% claimed that the presence of the outlet centre made their village more visible in the region. An affirmative opinion had more than 50% about the question of jobs for residents of the municipality. Approximately 60% of all interviewed people presented their stance that the land, where the outlet center can be found, could be used better and more effectively, such as for agriculture. More than half of the questioned people proclaimed that the process of the outlet center construction increased prices, especially the prices of land. Fewer than 70% of the respondents answered that the outlet centre can pull more investors to the municipality or its neighborhood in the future. The majority (70.59%) of the surveyed sample does not use the outlet centre for their free-time activities, but on the contrary, more than 65% do not consider the establishment of the outlet center as a mistake.

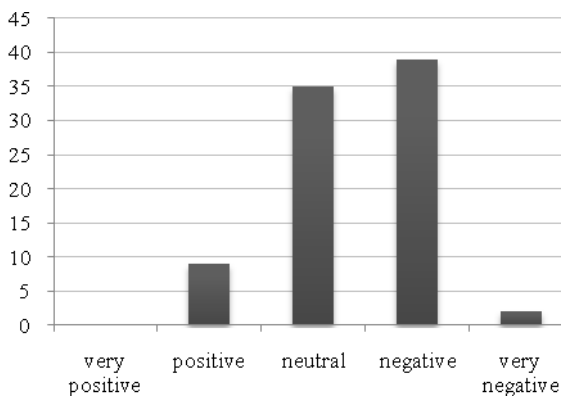
The proportional shares of inhabitants' answers on all statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Inhabitants' reactions on the statements (%)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
S1	63.53	20.00	5.88	7.06	3.53
S2	14.12	40.00	16.47	17.65	11.76
S3	47.06	15.29	11.76	16.47	9.41
S4	30.59	22.35	2.35	32.94	11.76
S5	10.59	16.47	20.00	25.88	27.06
S6	29.41	23.53	23.53	15.29	8.24
S7	15.29	24.71	20.00	32.94	7.06
S8	21.18	22.35	35.29	11.76	9.41
S9	17.65	52.94	17.65	9.41	2.35
S10	18.82	23.53	32.94	16.47	8.24
S11	29.41	24.71	16.47	23.53	5.88
S12	3.53	17.65	8.24	20.00	50.59
S13	12.94	30.59	28.24	21.18	7.06
S14	14.12	12.94	4.71	25.88	42.35
S15	4.71	25.88	15.29	34.12	20.00

The final results of the questionnaire survey realized, via the Likert scale, were that it showed neutral or negative attitudes of the interviewed inhabitants of the municipality of Voderady to the shopping destination located in their village. A negative attitude presented 39 of all the people, whereas 35 people of the sample perceived the outlet center in the neutral way (Fig. 1). Very negative feeling was contributed only by 2 respondents. Positive attitude was recorded by 9 people, whereas very positive attitude was not obtained. These final results reflect the situation that residents of the municipality have not been in a good mood about the presence of their shopping destination.

Fig. 1 Final attitudes of residents of the municipality of Voderady to the presence of the outlet centre



Conclusion

A boom of outlet centers hit Western Europe mostly in the last two decades of the last century. Slovak customers showed their favorability to this shopping venue by visiting the well-known outlet centers in Parndorf that is located near the Slovak and Hungarian borders. Some good conditions for the development of this shopping destination in Slovakia was formed. Not only did the outlet centre attract many customers from various regions, but first of all, it affected lives of ordinary people living in the municipality, where it is located. The realized questionnaire survey brought various attitudes of the population that showed some contrary features of perception of the outlet centre. Mostly older people, who cannot find a job in the outlet centre and also remember utilization of land for agriculture due to the quality of soil, did not present positive attitudes to the presence of the outlet center. Another group of people consisted of a population up to 40 years (students, employed people, mothers during maternity leave, etc.), who thought that the presence of the outlet center is a possibility for the

municipality and its inhabitants. Each respondent answered at least one question in a negative way, what resulted to the fact of not very positive feelings about the outlet center. Looking to the future, we should think more intensively about the people, who get in touch with the outlet center on a daily basis; not only workers and management members that commute to the place every day, but especially ordinary people, who see the outlet center every day. The outlet center in the municipality of Voderady celebrates 1 year of existence (it was opened on October 30, 2013) and there is a future possibility that the residents of the municipality will change their mood about it, if they see more cooperation and interconnections between their everyday life and the presence of the outlet center.

The research of large shopping destinations' influence to rural settlements in Slovakia has not been finished yet. Hence we hope that the issue of outlet centers and their position can be the matter of future studies.

Acknowledgement

The research was financially supported by the project No. VEGA 1/0799/14 "Geografické aspekty maloobchodnej siete veľkých miest v nových trhových podmienkach (Geographical aspects of retail network of large cities in new market conditions)".

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