

PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE OF SPECIFIC GROUP OF EMPLOYEES – THE CASE OF TOUR GUIDES AND TOUR MANAGERS

PREVENTIVNA ZDRAVSTVENA ZAŠTITA SPECIFIČNIH SKUPINA ZAPOSLENIKA - SLUČAJ TURISTIČKIH VODIČA I TURISTIČKIH PRATITELJA

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Abstract

The article focuses on the question how tourist agencies take care of preventive health care issues of a specific group of employees, tour guides and tour managers. Tour guides and tour managers are due to their work constantly exposed to certain travel diseases. Since tour guides and tour managers in most cases are not employed by tourist agencies, i.e. they are mostly self-employed, tourist agencies do not have the same legal obligation towards them as if they were their direct employees. However it is in the interest of any employer to have their employees healthy. Through perspective of professionalism the issue we are exploring shows how well tourist agencies are taking care of their employees. Our research was done among tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia, with a sample of 500, what represents 25.27% of total population. Altogether we received 120 responses what represents 24.00% of all interviewees or 6.06% of the whole population of tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia. We found out that the lack of insufficiently regulated job status of tour guides and tour managers lowers the standard of professionalism when it comes to preventive health care, and threatens the quality of service in tourism sector. However we have also found out that those tour guides and tour managers that work more often in potentially high risk environments tend to have more support from the tourist agencies that are providing them their jobs. However their support is still not nearly enough to make a substantial difference.

Sažetak

Članak se usredotočuje na pitanje kako turističke agencije brinu o pitanju preventivne zdravstvene zaštite specifične skupine zaposlenika, turističkih vodiča i turističkih pratitelja. Turistički vodiči i turistički pratitelji su zbog prirode posla koji obavljaju stalno izloženi određenim bolestima. Budući da turistički vodiči i turistički pratitelji u većini slučajeva nisu zaposlenici turističkih agencija, odnosno uglavnom su samozaposleni, turističke agencije nemaju istu pravnu obvezu prema njima kao da su njihovi zaposlenici. No, u interesu je svakog poslodavca da su mu zaposlenici zdravi. Kroz perspektivu profesionalnosti problem koji istražujemo pokazuje koliko dobro turističke agencije vode brigu o svojim zaposlenicima. Naše istraživanje provedeno je među turističkim vodičima i turističkim pratiteljima u Sloveniji, na uzorku od 500, što predstavlja 25,27% od ukupnog broja te populacije. Sveukupno smo primili 120 odgovora što predstavlja 24,00% svih ispitanika ili 6,06% ukupne populacije vodiča i pratitelja u Sloveniji. Doznali smo da nedostatan regulirani status posla turističkih vodiča i turističkih pratitelja smanjuje standard profesionalizma kada je riječ o preventivnoj zdravstvenoj skrbi, a prijeti i kvaliteti usluga u turizmu općenito. Međutim, doznali smo i da oni vodiči i pratitelji koji često rade u potencijalno visoko rizičnom okruženju imaju veću podršku turističkih agencija koje ih angažiraju. No njihova podrška još uvijek nije ni približno dovoljna da bi činila značajniju razliku.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traveling has nowadays become a big business. Since more and more people are traveling and since they do not always have the time to plan and organize their travels, this has become a growingly business for tourist agencies. Some people still like to explore new countries alone, thus leaving only the organization of transport to the destination and accommodation to the tourist agencies. On the other hand we have others that prefer traveling with a professional tour guide or tour manager, leaving them to handle also the content part of the traveling. There is an interesting bond between tourist agencies on one hand and tour guides and tour managers on the other. They both need each other. Tourist agencies can offer different kinds of tours more appealing to certain group of costumers with the help of professional tour guides and tour managers, and tour guides and tour managers need tourist agencies to provide them with their work. We have to understand that a job of a tour guide or a tour manager has same as many other jobs in tourism sector several specifics, such as: long working hours, part time employment, high turnover rates and lower yearly average salaries than comparable sectors, and it is a border sector in a sense of sharing pool of employees with similar sectors, which offer higher salaries, better working conditions, contact with people and so on /1/, /2/, /3/. Never the less, it still remains that a happy employee is a good employee, who offers high quality of service and thus provides for loyal customer /4/ and this very fact leads us to presume that tourist agencies would be interested in taking good care of its employees.

But is it really so? In Slovenia, tour guides and tour managers are mostly self-employed, there are two reasons for that, first because of the seasonal nature of the job: most of the agencies need far more tour guides and tour managers in the peak of the season than they could provide work for in the off season time, and second Slovenian legislation does not recognize tour guide or a tour manager as an occupation, formally registered in the registry of occupations, thus it is not possible for tourist agencies to even have a systematization of work places within the company that would presuppose the occupation of tour guide or a tour manager. This subsequently means that tourist

agencies are not employing tour guides or tour managers but in vast majority of cases are renting their services thus not making themselves legally responsible for anything related to workplace health regulations. These kind of “employer and employee” relations, only conditionally speaking, are a source of stress for tour guides and tour managers /5/. As already proven in several other cases /6/, /7/, there is a high need for professional treatment of tour guides and tour managers, because of their important role in the success of the business. When on the tour majority of success of the tour depends on the tour guides and tour managers and we all know that better working conditions boost professionalism at work /8/. This brings us to one of the key points of this article. We state that insufficiently regulated job status of tour guides and tour managers lowers the standard of professionalism and has thus consequently negative impact on tourism business. Through this article we present a case of preventive health care as one of the key-stones in professional employer-employee relationship. Next to the social insurance, health care is the most important issue of individual rights, guaranteed by work regulations. Regular jobs in Slovenia guarantee covered health and social insurance and thus provide for secure status of employees and boost for career development. Contractual or other forms of employment, which do not cover regular health and social insurance, have in Slovenia a second-quality status and are not seen as perspective. Health issues in any kinds of job do cause stress and affects the quality of work, especially when in different environment and in contact with many different people. A fear from contagious diseases, micro-climate and vegetation demands, and food and drink risks can restrain a tour guide and tour managers from taking the job since preventive health care and means of protection are not provided. This indicates that health-care is an important area of employer-employee relationship that should be taken care of in order to provide for high quality standards of tourist service and tourist satisfaction. The aim of the article was to examine the specifics of tour guides and tour manager employments from health care point of view. The first part of this article examines the theoretical background on professionalism at work, occupation of tour guides and tour manager and preventive health care while traveling. In the second part of this article we tried to establish,

how tour guides and tour managers see the attitude of tourist agencies regarding preventive health care of their tour guides and tour managers.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 PROFESSIONALISM AT WORK

Professionalism at work can be defined as a specific style of behaviour in the workplace that is guided by certain personal and organizational values and it is exhibited in person's behaviour at work /9/. However professionalism does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive /10/. According to this definition we could say that acting in a professional manner means following some individual as well as organizational values. We can argue that professionalism is how personal and organizational values manifest in individuals conduct, since values are beliefs upon which individuals perform their tasks on the basis of their preferences /11/ and organizational values are a part of organizational culture that defines expectations regarding behavior, modes of conduct, decision-making and communication styles /12/. In many ways we could say that professionalism is something we might see everywhere, but we can always upgrade the levels of professionalism. This is especially true when it comes to so called soft skills, where research /13/ has shown that they are a factor of improved job satisfaction and even more importantly satisfaction of customers. Customer satisfaction is always a top priority for services oriented businesses such as tourism. This leads to assumption that tourist agencies should focus a lot of energy into providing their employees all the necessary conditions so that they can act as professional as possible in order to increase satisfaction of their customers.

1.2 TOUR GUIDES AND TOUR MANAGERS

Tour guides and tour managers are a specific work group. Long working hours, many days spend on the road, dependence on seasons, working outdoors and many more other things make

this profession specific. People who want to work in this profession need certain predispositions in order to be successful. An individual working in this profession need to be good at communication skills, has to have a positive attitude towards work, calm personality, good self-organizational skills and ability of systematic thinking /14/. Profession of tour guides and tour managers is only partially regulated in Republic of Slovenia /15/. These are more or less regulations defining only the way how someone can acquire the license for a tour guide or a tour manager so he or she is able to work in this profession. The definition of both professions, provided by law /16/ suggests that tour managers' role is to administratively manage the tour while content of the tour is done by local tour guides at the area of travel, while tour guides combine these two roles into one person. It is important to stress that in this area, Slovenian system of licensing for tour guides and tour managers is relatively loose, that is why by getting the license for a tour guide or a tour manager a person is only making "the first step in this world, that demands from a person to do much more studying before he or she can become a good tour guide or a tour manager". In current form of education for tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia there is no content related to health care as we have established in previous research /17/ although tour guides and tour managers clearly report that they would need more practical knowledge.

Since vast majority of tour guides and tour managers is not employed by tourist agencies, an important issue is the mode of employment, as mentioned in the introduction. This position of tour guides and tour managers does not mean that they are not performing their work well. Many research has shown that quality of work of tour guides and tour managers is strongly correlated to customer satisfaction /18/, /19/, /20/, that is why professional status and good working conditions of tour guides and tour managers are even more important, given that quality of work is (at least partially) linked with professionalism.

1.3 PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE WHILE TRAVELING

"Preventive health care measures are defined as intervention in internal or external environment of a person with the purpose to prevent illnesses

or any other negative health issue. Preventive activities are aiming to eradicate or suppress illnesses and also eliminate or to the highest extent reduce the consequences of illnesses or at minimum slow down the progression of the illnesses themselves. Preventive health care activities follow two basic principles: a) population principle, that is directed towards population with the goal to reduce risk for negative health occurrences and b) individual principle, which is directed towards individuals with high risk potential, where the goal is to protect individuals from acquiring diseases or reduce the risk of acquiring the disease. There are also two different approaches in the use of preventive health care standards, a) general or nonspecific measures, that are directed towards prevention of various diseases and their consequences and b) special or specific measures, which are directed towards prevention of specific type of diseases and its consequences" /21/. It is not expected for tourist agencies to work on preventive health care, since this is not their core business, but there is certainly some expectation that employees in tourist agencies should know the basics about preventive health care regarding the specific region they are assigned to. However in most counties these activities are promoted by some sort of government agencies, in the case of Slovenia this is the National institute for public health. Promotional activities entitled "Zdravi na pot+nazaj" (in English: Healthy on the way and back) are a product of Slovenian National institute for public health, where they have defined their goals very clearly, and the main goal is promoting preventive health care before and while traveling /22/. They have also very clearly stated the target groups for these activities, which are a) passengers, which want to get the right information about potential health hazards before traveling and b) public health workers, tourist workers and tour guides whom they want to educate about their role in promoting safe and healthy travel by giving them necessary information. Since tourism jobs always represent risk for all participants, an important part of working conditions in tourism sector is preventive health actions and insurances. Health problems are not only an issue when traveling abroad to a long – distance spots. True, in some other parts of the world there is different microclimate and livelihood of microorganisms that we are not used to, but also crowded placed in our neighbourhood can be a source of conta-

rious diseases. Also traveling (by plane, by ship) can cause more or less serious health trouble. From this point of view health care of tour guides and tour managers is of core importance for good quality of service they are providing, since tour agencies cannot afford to have a sick tour guide or tour manager on a long-distance spot, where there is no other proper replacement available. Also, tourist agencies as well as tour guides or tour managers are a source of information for the tourist, so they should have complete information on health preventive actions.

2 METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this article a survey was conducted among tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia. Subject of our research was the attitude of tourist agencies as employers of tour guides and tour managers towards preventive healthcare of employees. Although due to the nature of work most of the tour guides and tour managers are self-employed and offer their services to tourist agencies on an open market, we would expect the tourist agencies to offer at least the consulting aspect in this issue. For the needs of the research we have set up the following hypotheses:

H₁: Tourist agency provides the necessary information to tour guides and tour managers regarding the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling.

H₂: Tourist agency does not finance the additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers.

H₃: Tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers.

To confirm or reject the given hypotheses we have identified variables to evaluate what is the attitude of tourist agencies towards preventive health care of tour guides and tour managers such as:

1. Tourist agency informs tour guide or tour manager about the dangers of diseases while travelling (label: provided_information).
2. Tourist agency finances additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers (label: health_insurance_financing).

3. Tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers (label: preventive_gear).

For this survey a questionnaire was designed and divided into several parts. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to evaluate to what extend tour guides and tour managers know certain dangerous diseases that they could be exposed to while travelling/working, the second part asked them to what extend do tourist agencies cooperate with them in the area of preventive health care. At the end the questionnaire some general demographic questions such as gender, age, level of education, number of days they work per year etc. were included.

Interviewees were asked to respond to all questions information on a 5 stage Likert response scale, where grade 1 meant they do not agree at all with the statement, grade 5 meant that they agree completely with the statement, grades 2, 3 and 4 provided intermediate values, except those referring to demographic. Empirical data used in this article are a part of a wider research that was carried out between 29th of January 2014 and 28th of February 2014. Research was conducted among 500 randomly selected interviewees, selected from the Chamber of Commerce's registry of tour guides and tour managers, which is published on Chamber of Commerce's web page /23/. Randomly selected interviewees were also contacted via e-mail to inform them about the research and to ask them to participate in a specially designed online survey. The annual report /24/ on tour guide and tour managers licences for the year 2013 states that on the date of 31 December 2013 there were 1978 registered tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia. Our sample of 500 represents 25.27% of total population. Altogether, we have received 120 responses what represents 24.00% of all interviewees or 6.06% of the whole population of tour guides and tour managers in Slovenia. The annual report also has some statistical data that we can compare between population and sample, in the annual report it is said that average age of tour guides and tour managers is "little under 43 years of age", our calculated value is 42.16 years of age. As far as gender goes, annual report shows that 44.99% of tour guides and tour managers are male, and 55.01% are female, our calculated values for the sample are 43.62% male and 56.38%

are female, we have also calculated the value of chi-square for this variable and found out that the value of chi-square is 4,473 and p value 0,034. All of above information gives us confidence to conclude that our sample is representative. Empirical Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, t-test, variance analysis and Pearsons correlation coefficient analysis.

3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPETATION

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ANALYSIS

Among interviewees there were 41 (43.62%) male and 53 (56.38%) female interviewees. According to age they were divided into five age groups with relatively uniform distribution: 20 interviewees (21.3 %) up to 32 years formed the first group, 24 interviewees (25.5%) aged 33 to 38 years formed the second, 14 interviewees (14.9%) aged 39 to 44 years belonged to the third group, the fourth group consisted of 17 interviewees (18.1%) aged 45 to 50 years, whereas the last group featured 19 interviewees (20.2%) aged 51 years and over. This distribution shows that profession of tour guides and tour managers is not limited by certain age, since the two extreme groups young (up to 32 years) and older (51 years and older) are represented in similar share. In terms of education level, 22 interviewees (23.2%) have a secondary school diploma, 28 interviewees (29.4%) have a college diploma, 36 interviewees (37.9%) have a university diploma and 9 interviewees (9.5%) have a post-graduate diploma, what indicates very high level of education in this profession. Among interviewees who answered the question regarding their licence type, there are 69 tour guides (72.6%) and 26 tour managers (27.4%). Although 25 interviewees did not want to disclose what their licence type is, we still included them in the survey since we have emailed the survey only to the people in the register of tour guides and tour managers, where one or the other licence is necessary to have in order to be enlisted in the register. Interviewees were also asked about the length of their work experience, where 27 (28.7%) responded that they have been in this profession up to 8 years, 28 (29.8%) responded that they have been in this profession between 9 and 13 years, 15 (16.0%) have been in this profession between 14 to 18 years and 24 (25.5%) have been in this profession for 19 years or more. The last demographic

question referred to the average number of days per year that the interviewees perform their job, whereby 39 (41.1%) responded that it was up to 25 days per year, for 14 (14.7%) it was 26 to 50 days per year, 10 (10.5%) responded that it was 51 to 75 days per year, 12 (12.6%) responded that they work 76 to 100 days per year and 20 (21.1%) responded that they work over 100 days per year. Cronbach's Alpha was run with the result of

0.863, which shows a good validity of questionnaire /25/.

3.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

In the first step descriptive statistics of variables were performed, results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean values and standard deviations of variables.

Variable	Mean value	Standard deviation
Tourist agency informs tour guide or tour manager about the dangers of diseases while travelling.	1.979	1.218
Tourist agency finances additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers.	1.673	1.314
Tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers.	1.428	0.941

Because the values for individual variables are extremely low, as we can see from Table 1, we decided to take more in-depth analysis of certain variables was conducted. For the overview of

answers on individual variables we have created Table 2.

Table 2: Values for individual variables answer by answer.

Variable	Answer	%
Tourist agency informs tour guide or tour manager about the dangers of diseases while travelling.	I do not agree at all	50.0
	I mostly do not agree	20.4
	Neither agree neither disagree	17.3
	I mostly agree	6.1
	I totally agree	6.1
Tourist agency finances additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers.	I do not agree at all	74.5
	I mostly do not agree	6.1
	Neither agree neither disagree	7.1
	I mostly agree	2.0
	I totally agree	10.2
Tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers.	I do not agree at all	76.5
	I mostly do not agree	12.2
	Neither agree neither disagree	7.1
	I mostly agree	0.0
	I totally agree	4.1

As shown in Table 2, interviewees do not agree at all in vast majority with all the statements, pre-

sented in our questionnaire. Considering the fact that all variables were set as positive statements

on the expectations of what an employer should do for their employees, this is to a large extent shocking. It is somewhat understandable that tourist agencies do not finance additional health insurance for the tour guides and tour managers, since they are not directly employed and the agencies are not obliged to cover that costs. Much more concerning considering the fact that the tour guides and tour managers are still representatives of the agency on the field regardless of whether employed directly or indirectly is the fact that

majority of interviewees reported that tourist agencies do not even provide information regarding the dangers of diseases while travelling.

3.3 CORRELATIONS ANALYSIS

With the help of Pearson's correlation analysis we tried to identify correlations between certain demographic variables and variables in the first step. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between demographic and some variables.

Variable	Age	Average no. of days worked in the last year
Provided information	.224*	-.272**
Health insurance financing	-.203*	.227*

** p = < 0.01; * p = < 0.05

Through the analysis we have found out that older interviewees more frequently report that the tourist agencies provide them with the information regarding the dangers of diseases while travelling but less frequently report that tourist agencies finance additional health insurance for them than younger interviewees. We have also found out that those interviewees that work more days per year report that tourist agencies finance

additional health insurance for them but interestingly provide them with less the information regarding the dangers of diseases while travelling and also that tourist agencies are less likely to demand preventive vaccination for those diseases that it is possible.

Further analysis shows some positive correlation among them (Table 4).

Table 4: Correlation among variables

Variable	Provided information	Health insurance financing	Preventive gear
Provided information	1		
Health insurance financing	.054	1	
Preventive gear	.178	.456**	1

** p = < 0.01; * p = < 0.05

Results show that interviewees who more frequently report that agencies finance additional health insurance also report that tourist agencies provide the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous diseases while travelling.

Based on these findings we conduct one-way anova tests on variables that correlate, results are shown in the following subchapter.

3.4 IDENTIFYING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

In this part we have tested if there are any statistically significant differences regarding the average days that tour guides and tour managers work per year, results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Statistically significant differences among certain variables and the average number of working days per year.

Variable	F	p	Mean value		
			Average mean value	Group mean value	
Provided information	3.307	.014	2.01	Up to 25 days	2.03
				26 to 50 days	1.86
				51 to 75 days	2.70
				76 to 100 days	1.75
				over 100 days	1.35
Health insurance financing	2.032	.025	1.69	Up to 25 days	1.36
				26 to 50 days	1.50
				51 to 75 days	2.60
				76 to 100 days	1.42
				over 100 days	2.20
Preventive gear	3.056	.021	1.44	Up to 25 days	1.26
				26 to 50 days	1.36
				51 to 75 days	2.30
				76 to 100 days	1.17
				over 100 days	1.60

We can see in Table 5 see that regarding the number of working days per year there is statistically significant difference with this variable and variable **Provided information** ($F=3.307$; $p=.014$; average mean value 2.01). This variable was evaluated below average by interviewees, who work over 100 days per year (1.35), also by those interviewees who work between 76 and 100 days per year (1.75) and by those interviewees who work between 26 and 50 days per year (1.86). Above average grade was given by interviewees who work up to 25 days per year (2.03) and those who work from 51 to 75 days per year (2.70).

We have also established that regarding the number of working days per year there is statistically significant difference between this variable and variable **Health insurance financing** ($F=2.032$; $p=.025$; average mean value 1.69). This variable was evaluated below average by interviewees, who work up to 25 days per year (1.36), also by those interviewees that work between 76 and 100 days per year (1.42) and also by those interviewees who work between 26 and 50 days per year

(1.50). Above average grade was given by interviewees who work and those who work over 100 days per year (2.20) and also by those from 51 to 75 days per year (2.60).

Finally we have also found out that regarding the number of working days per year there is statistically significant difference between this variable and variable **Preventive gear** ($F=3.056$; $p=.021$; average mean value 1.44). This variable was evaluated below average by interviewees, who work between 76 and 100 days per year (1.17), also by those interviewees that work up to 25 days per year (1.26), and also by those interviewees who work between 26 and 50 days per year (1.36). Above average grade was given by interviewees who work over 100 days per year (1.60) and also by those from 51 to 75 days per year (2.30).

Another test was done to prove any statistically significant differences regarding the age of tour guides and tour managers, results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Statistically significant differences among certain variables and the age of interviewees.

Variable	F	p	Mean value		
			Average mean value	Group mean value	
Provided information	2.594	.042	2.02	Up to 32 years	1.80
				33 to 38 years	1.96
				39 to 44 years	1.50
				45 to 50 years	2.00
				51 years or more	2.74

From Table 6 we can see that regarding age of interviewees there is statistically significant difference with this variable and variable **Provided information** (F=2.594; p=.042; average mean value 2.02). This variable was evaluated below average by interviewees, who are between 39 and 44 years old (1.50), also by interviewees that are up to 32 years old, also by interviewees that are between 33 and 38 years old (1.96) and also by interviewees that are between 45 and 50 years old. Above average grade was given by interviewees that are 51 years old or older (2.74).

3.5 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Based on analysis of all the gathered empirical data we were able to test research hypothesis, the test shows that H_1 , with which we assumed that *tourist agency provides the necessary information to tour guides and tour managers regarding the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling* was **rejected**.

We have tested this hypothesis using the analysis of average values of selected variables, we have found out that all interviewees evaluated variable *tourist agency informs tour guide or tour manager about the dangers of diseases while travelling* (label: *provided information*), with an average of 1.979, standard deviation 1.218. Based on this result we could reject the hypothesis since average value does not surpass value of 2.500. More in-depth analysis showed that 50.0% of all interviewees do not agree at all with the statement that represents this variable, additional 20.4% mostly do not agree, only 17.3% neither agree nor disagree, and 6.1% mostly agree and 6.1% of all interviewees totally agree with this statement.

Further analysis showed that there is no statistically significant differences between tour guides and tour managers, however there are two statis-

tically significant differences, regarding the amount of working days per year the mean value of the whole group was 2.01 (F=3.307, p=0.014), we have found out that those tour guides and tour managers who work between 51 and 75 days per year evaluate this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 2.70), also those that work up to 25 days per year evaluate this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 2.03), all the other tour guides and tour managers evaluate this statistically significantly lower. Regarding age of tour guides and tour managers the variable evaluated in average has a mean value of 2.02 (F=2.594, p=0.042), but significantly higher was this variable evaluated by those tour guides and tour managers, who are 51 years old or older (mean 2.74).

The H_2 , with which we for saw that *tourist agency does not finance the additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers* was **confirmed**.

We have tested this hypothesis using the analysis of average values of selected variables. Variable, *tourist agency finances additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers* (label: *health_insurance_financing*) was evaluated with an average of 1.673, standard deviation 1.314. Based on this result we could confirm the hypothesis since average value does not surpass value of 2.500. Additional analysis shows that 74.5% of all interviewees do not agree at all with the statement that presents this variable, additional 6.1% mostly do not agree, only 7.1% neither agree nor disagree, 2.0% mostly agree and 10.2% of all interviewees totally agree with this statement.

However, further analysis showed some interesting data, regarding the amount of working days per year the mean value of the whole group was 1.69 (F=2.032, p=0.025), we have found out that

those tour guides and tour managers who work between 51 and 75 days per year evaluate this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 2.60), also those that work over 100 days per year evaluate this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 2.20), all the other tour guides and tour managers evaluate this statistically significantly lower.

The last, H_3 , with which we assumed that tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers, was **rejected**.

We have tested this hypothesis using the analysis of average values of selected variables. Variable, *tourist agency provides the preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.) against the exposure to dangerous disease while travelling for tour guides and tour managers (label: preventive gear)* was evaluated with an average of 1.428, standard deviation 0.941. Based on this result we could confirm the hypothesis since average value does not surpass value of 2.500. It is interesting to see that 76.5% of all interviewees do not agree at all with the statement that represents this variable, additional 12.2% mostly do not agree, only 7.1% neither agree nor disagree, and 4.1% of all interviewees totally agree.

Further analysis showed only one statistically significant differences. Regarding the amount of working days per year the mean value of the whole group was 1.44 ($F=3.056$, $p=0.022$). We have found out that those tour guides and tour managers who work between 51 and 75 days per year evaluated this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 2.30), also those that work over 100 days per year evaluate this variable statistically significantly higher (mean 1.60), and all the other tour guides and tour managers evaluate this statistically significantly lower.

4 INTERPRETATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL USE

The purpose of this article was to find out what is the attitude of tourist agencies towards preventive health care of specific group of employees - tour guides and tour managers. We must say that tour guides and tour managers are a very specific

group of employees in Slovenian labour market. Due to the specific type of work, where it is virtually impossible to create a 40 hour work week, 20 or so work day per months and etc. most of tour guides and tour managers are self-employed. There is also the problem with amount of work on annual basis where there are only a few tourist agencies that could provide enough work for a tour guide or tour manager throughout the year. All of these are the reasons why the solution for most of the tour guides is self-employment and thus working for several tourist agencies. This brings us to the next question that we need to address. Since most of the tour guides and tour managers are self-employed it would seem reasonable that they have to take care of their own preventive health care. On the other hand it is also evident that they are self-employed because of the system issue addressed above. Thus tour guides and tour managers are left out of regular jobs because of the system issue. The fact is that for tourist agencies, tour guides and tour managers are front line employees, regardless of the fact that they are employed by the agency or self-employed. They are there to represent the agency, work with tourists, show them places, make them feel good etc., all of that in the name of the agency, not themselves as self-employed tour guides or tour managers. Taking into consideration all mentioned above, we could expect tourist agencies to devote time and also some resources in well-being of tour guides and tour managers. After all, which agency would want to have a tour guide or a tour manager somewhere half way across the world, with a group of tourists, sick or even worse in a hospital due to some illness related to travelling? Data clearly shows that tourist agencies do not devote much time or money into preventive health care of tour guides and tour managers as their specific group of employees. The fact is that they are not legally binded to do so, but there is no doubt that it should be in their interest. There is not all negative in the data we have gathered, tourist agencies in most cases inform tour guides and tour managers about the dangers of diseases while travelling (1.979). Both of these findings can be attributed to the fact that in some cases it is a requirement for visa application, and also that tourist agencies are legally binded to inform all travellers (including tour guides and tour managers) about dangers of diseases while travelling. As established in this

study, tourist guides and tourist managers are highly educated professionals, since more than 67 % of them has college or university diploma and another 9.5 % has a post-graduate diploma. Thus tour guides and tour managers form a group of employees that have many qualities of highly professional cadre, what is a foundation for a high quality service we are all looking for. The findings clearly indicate that the area of preventive health care of certain groups of employees, in our case tour guides and tour managers, in tourism sector leaves a lot of room for improvements. It seems that tourist agencies do not invest much time or money into preventive health care of tour guides or tour managers although they are their front line employees. We understand that the main reason for this behaviour is the pure fact that they are not legally binded to do so, since majority of tour guides and tour managers are not directly employed by the agencies. However we have seen that in some cases tourist agencies do invest a bit more time and money into preventive health care for tour guides and tour managers, especially with ones that are more presumably more exposed. The recommendation seems rather straight forward, agencies should invest more time and money in preventive health care of specific group of employees, in our case tour guides and tour managers, in order to assure better quality of service. But we will try to incorporate the agency viewpoint as well, thus our recommendation is for agencies to devote more time into informing tour guides and tour managers about the dangers of diseases while travelling, to prepare in coordination with National Institute of Public Health periodical trainings about the dangers of diseases while traveling and provide preventive means of protection (i.e. repellents, clothing, ect.), which are not extremely costly for the tourist agency. As far as financing preventive vaccination and additional health insurance for tour guides and tour managers our recommendation is to provide every tour guide and tour manager that works for the agency with information on best available offers and maybe partly finance additional health insurance for those tour guides that work for the agency a large number of days per year. Taking into consideration all suggestions we can expect the situation in this area to improve.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this research is done only on Slovenian tour guides and tour managers, it can serve as a model and a basis for comparative studies. Although the number of respondents is not extremely high, analysis show that the sample included in the research is representative, also the calculated Cronbach Alpha coefficient is sufficient. As far as suggestion for further research goes, it would be interesting to do similar research in other countries that have similar system. In Slovenia there is a need for research on how representatives responsible for coordination of work of tour guides and tour managers as well as management of tourist agencies sees this issue. Another possibility for further research can also be seen in the segment of employer-employee relationships in this context, since it is a very specific group of employees.

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