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## **THE COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EXPENDITURE STATISTICS ON OPEN AREA: METHODOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS. THE CASE OF THE VENETO REGION**

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It is now generally acknowledged the need of collecting information on the expenditure behaviour of inbound tourists, which is crucial for estimating the macro-economic impact of tourism in an area (open or closed) in terms of GDP, employment and balance of payments. The survey on inbound tourist expenditure in the Veneto region here described represents the first step towards the development of a Regional Tourism Information System, useful not only for researchers but also for all public and private operators involved in tourism management, marketing and planning.

The paper describes objectives, methodology and organisation of this survey, by providing the analytical framework for the systematic collection of data on characteristics and consumption behaviour of inbound tourists.

Key words: inbound tourism; open area; tourism expenditure; visitor survey; Regional Tourism Information System

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the collection of inbound tourism expenditure statistics has gained more and more consideration among public and private operators, as a crucial element for measuring the economic benefits of tourism in an area (open or closed). Despite the travel and tourism industry is becoming the first world industry both in terms of turnover and employees, the care taken in defining the structure, characteristics and performances of such aggregate is still inadequate if compared with its real importance.

The estimation of the economic role of tourism appears quite complex, given the heterogeneous nature of the "travel and tourism demand" and of the "travel and

tourism industry". Improvements in this field come first of all from adopting more accurate procedures and methodologies at international level for:

- a) defining the "travel and tourism industry" and, consequently, the activities taking part in it;
- b) measuring the tourist product as a whole and by single item;
- c) evaluating the total macroeconomic impact --direct, indirect, induced -- of the travel and tourism industry, in terms of income, value added, employment, balance of payments.

Furthermore, the attention paid to its economic impact does not always go hand in hand with similar attention devoted to the development of an integrated information system, adequate to the needs of researchers and of public and private planners and managers.

The research-work carried out by Ciset in collaboration with the Tourism Department of the Veneto Region contributes to overcome this lack by providing a methodology for the setting up of a Regional Tourism Information System, through a systematic collection of data on characteristics and consumption behaviour of inbound tourists.

This methodology, although applied at a regional level, may be easily exported to any kind of area, open or closed, whatever its size (e.g. a country, a single tourist resort, etc.). Furthermore, given the role of the region in the Italian tourism market, the results obtained can be suitably extended over the regional level. Thank to the valuable concentration of cultural and natural attractions, the Veneto region is in fact one of the most important destination of international tourists holidaying in Italy. It adds up over 5 million of international arrivals (20% of total for Italy) and more than 22 million of international nights (22% of the total for Italy).

This paper provides an insight into organisation and results of the survey on inbound tourism expenditure carried out in the Veneto region from May 1994 to April 1995. The main features of this survey are:

- its *extensiveness*, considering the number of questionnaires distributed (9,300) and collected (60% of the total); the width of the territory involved (the Veneto Region); the number of tourist areas and resorts surveyed (are cities, mountains, sea, lake, spa resorts); the number and category of accommodation establishments concerned (from hotels to campsites and rented dwellings); the time length (one year); the public and private organisations involved, and the network of interviewers and co-ordinators arranged;
- its *development according to the new guidelines suggested by WTO (1995)* and then the opportunity to compare those general and technical recommendations with the specific problems faced and the practical solutions adopted;
- the questionnaire design and, specifically, the *organisation of questions concerning tourist expenditure*. The seven broad categories recommended by WTO (Package travel, Package holiday and Package tour; Accommodation; Food and drink; Transport; Recreation, culture and sporting activities; Shopping; Other) were broken down into 46 items, consistent with the consumption

functions and the classification of production sectors used in National Accounts and useful for the analysis of tourism's economic impact.

In detail, Section 2 provides a short overview on different approaches to the concept of "travel and tourism industry" discussed in the existing literature and on the definition of tourism expenditure. Section 3 describes the organisation of the survey plan and the questionnaire design, while the analysis of the survey's results is the object of Section 4.

## 2. FROM TOURISTS' CONSUMPTION TO THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

The discussion on the importance of implementing a database on tourist expenditure to evaluate the economic impact of tourism into the whole production system originates from the controversy on the subject: can all the activities linked in some way to tourism be identified as an industry?

At the root of the debate is the peculiarity of the tourism industry: the product and technology heterogeneity of the manifold activities setting it up, and then the complexity of its production which can be acknowledged and defined *only where and when* it is purchased by tourists. But:

- tourists can consume different products at different points in time and at different places;
- the mix of goods and services produced for tourists is a complex aggregate which cannot be defined *a priori* and once for all;
- few goods and services are for tourists only (e.g. accommodation), while the majority are purchased in a small quantity by tourists, serving residents first of all (e.g. transport and catering services).

These preliminary issues point out the central role of tourist-consumer in defining the composition of the travel and tourism industry as a whole of "end-use" activities.

The centrality of tourist in different research fields also explains why the most important statistics on tourism demand -- those based on the notion of arrivals (to frontiers or to accommodation establishments) and nights -- are traditionally devoted to measuring volume and characteristics of tourist flows, while they are completely useless as indicators of economic performance. For this end, the same variables used for the other industries (e.g. production, revenue, and employment) have to be taken into account.

According to a research path, the concept of "travel and tourism industry" may be applied whenever among many sectors and organisations there is a whatever linkage able to change different products into one product, and which generates among the subjects such an aggregation function with a specific role and an accredited weight into the economic system (Wahab, 1975; Lundberg, 1976; Mc Intosh, 1977 e 1986). The opposing thought states that since this hypothetical industry can only be

defined through an "end-use" function, a distinct tourist product – i.e. produced with a specific production function by a well determined production sector -- does not exist (Chadwick, 1981).

The conceptual uncertainty about the existence of the travel and tourism industry and the fuzziness of its definition (Mieczkowski, 1981), represent a strong hindrance to the development of an information system suitable for the economic analysis of the phenomenon and consistent with the methodologies used for every other economic activity.

However, once its existence and definition have been approved, there can be no further justification for carrying out an analysis which, by choosing *a priori* only a few activities (those supposed to be the more significant) agrees to adopt their evolution and performances as being representative of the whole aggregate ("Supply Approach").

The understanding of such an entity is now the understanding of the plot of interdependencies going from the tourist consumption to the tourist production in all its complexity. In this context, the most effective approach is the "Travel Expenditure Estimation Method" or "Demand Approach", which consists in deriving the tourist product and, tautologically, the activities belonging to the industry, from what tourists consume. "Once travel expenditure estimates are produced by the appropriate expenditure model, the economic impact the expenditures generate can be simulated. Estimating the expenditures of individuals while travelling away from home is a formidable task", but "judging from the extensive literature on travel impact estimation, there is no consensus on the best approach" (Frechtling, 1994). The related literature, in fact, describes eight major recognised approaches: direct observation, sample survey, bank returns, residual receipts models, seasonal difference models, supply-side judgmental models, cost factor models.

The survey described here is part of the "sample surveys" approach, and in particular of the "visitor survey" method, since it has been carried out during tourists' stay in the Veneto region.

### 2.1. The definition of tourist expenditure

As discussed above, the evaluation of the economic impact of tourism on the production system of an area (country, region, etc.) starts from the analysis of the expenditure behaviour of tourists holidaying in that area (demand approach).

*Tourism expenditure* is defined as "the total consumption expenditure made by a visitor or on behalf of a visitor for and during his/her trip and stay at the destination" (WTO, 1995), where the word "destination" includes any significant place visited on the trip. This definition presumes that:

- *not* all goods or services consumed are *necessarily* by the visitor him/herself (e.g. a present or a souvenir purchased by the visitor on trip and given to someone else);
- the expenditure *may not necessarily* be undertaken by the visitor him/herself and, in that case, the person undertaking the expenditure may or may not be

accompanying the visitor (e.g. in the case of a student holidaying alone, the trip may be funded by parents).

In general, before recording any visitor's expenditure, it is necessary to take into account two important factors:

1. the *timing* of the expenditure, depending on when these expenses are made (in preparation for the trip, during the trip or after the trip);
2. the *items* which have to be included or excluded from tourism expenditure.

As for the first point, the various components making up tourism expenditure can be divided into three large groups:

- Advance outlays necessary for the preparation and undertaking of the trip (*pre-trip expenditure*);
- Expenses arising when travelling and at places visited (*on-trip expenditure*);
- Travel-related outlays made in the country/place of residence after returning from a trip (*post-trip expenditure*).

Tourism expenditure is considered to occur at the time at which the visitor purchases a product, i.e. when he/she acquires legal title to the goods or, for lack of such a title, when a service is rendered. About the purchase of a package tour or international transportation to another country, the title is generally assumed to be acquired in the visitor's residence (origin) country (WTO, 1995). Consequently, only the expenditure made for the trip but paid in advance ("pre-trip") to operators located in the destination country (e.g. accommodation), and all the expenses met during the stay in the reference country ("on-trip"), are of interest for studying inbound tourists' consumption and then the impact of travel on the national or local economy. Those are the categories of expenses measured in Ciset survey.

In recording expenditure items, it should also be taken into account that the level of detail reached in the data collection may also be different according to the *point of time* at which the researcher records the visitor's expenses. Specifically, the researcher may decide he wants to know:

- *all the expenses* met by the visitor *before and during the trip*. In this case the registration has to take place at the end of the trip before travelling back home (for international inbound visitors) or even after the return trip (for domestic inbound visitors only);
- *all the expenses* met by the visitor *before the trip* and those made *from departure to the time of the registration*;
- *all the expenses* met by the visitor *before the trip* and those made *the day before the registration* (average daily expenditure).
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There are advantages and disadvantages to all three methods. The first two call for the visitor's remembering all the expenses he has met. However, the advantage is that the average and total expenditure can be calculated from a larger number of items. The last method, which asks the visitor to remember the expenditure made the day before, can be applied more easily, especially in an open area. In Ciset survey the first method was adopted, by interviewing tourists at the end of their stay in the destination under study.

### 3. THE COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EXPENDITURE STATISTICS IN AN OPEN AREA. THE TOURIST SURVEY IN THE VENETO REGION

The accurate evaluation of the impact tourists' behaviour has on the economy of the destination (country and/or region), depends heavily on the survey's ability to capture the most important factors affecting their purchasing habits as well as on the reliability of the information collected.

As for the former aspect, the main factors influencing the composition and evolution of tourists' expenditure are:

- the **country of origin**. Different social and cultural models may favour varied consumption behaviour. Highly important is also the "exchange rate effect", which frequently affects the choice of the destination and, once this has been selected, the amount of expenditure to be made there (that is particularly true for the mark and dollar-area countries and, more recently, also for Japan);
- the **tourist district and resort**. Cultural tourism in cities of art, for example, is generally characterised by a very different expenditure pattern in comparison, for example, with beach, mountain or lake holiday. Moreover, the cost met for the stay may be quite different from one resort to another, even if tourists overnight in the same type and category of accommodation establishments;
- the **type of accommodation chosen** (hotels or other accommodation establishments). The level and composition of expenditure generally change according to the type of accommodation (hotels, campsites/tourist villages, rented dwellings) and to the category of the establishment chosen (5-4 star hotels, 3 star hotels, 2-1 star hotels, ....3 star campsites, 4 star tourist villages, etc.) and its qualitative level;
- the **length of stay**, which affects the choice of the transport mode used to reach the holiday resort or to organise local excursions, as well as the accommodation establishments and, more generally, the kind and amount of products purchased during the stay;
- the **holiday period** (e.g. high season or. low season), affecting above all the travel and accommodation costs.

Every holiday is characterised by a different mix of these five factors and, consequently, by the choice of a specific pattern of tourist products to be purchased. The different macro-economic impact of each purchasing behaviour is easily understandable.

Considering the reliability of information collected, the selection of a suitable collection method is crucial to ensure the quality of tourism expenditure statistics (WTO, 1995). The choice of the best methodology depends first of all on the type of tourism for which the expenditure is being measured: domestic tourism, inbound tourism and/or outbound tourism. Referring to inbound tourism, the tourist survey at accommodation establishments is the most appropriate approach for monitoring tourist flows in an open area, like a region. The advantages WTO (1995) highlights (detailed information on expenditure; reduction of recall difficulties; more accurate data to be collected; link between expenditure and visitors' profile) are reinforced by

the peculiarities of the area to be monitored. The lack of check points at borders, the size of the Veneto region, the manifold typologies of tourism it offers and, last but not least, the prevalence of international tourists travelling by car, are factors that justify the choice of this approach. Disadvantages mainly concern the complexity of sampling procedures and the organisation structure to be adopted (i.e. the need of a large team of skilled interviewers and co-ordinators as well as the active co-operation by hotel and non-hotel operators).

### **3.1. The survey organisation and the questionnaire design**

The survey, whose results are described in the next Section, was carried out at a sample of hotels and other accommodation establishments (campsites, holiday villages and rented dwellings) located in the most important tourist resorts of the Veneto Region.

9,300 questionnaires (7,600 of which to international tourists) were distributed throughout the region all over a year (from May 1994 to April 1995). The stratified random sampling with proportional distribution of the sample space was adopted and the role of each tourist area, each resort and each accommodation establishment — measured in terms of nights — were taken into account. The seasonal concentration of international flows in each resort was also considered for the monthly distribution of the questionnaires. In detail:

- in the first phase, the share of annual international tourist nights in each district (art cities, seaside, mountain, etc.) over the regional total was applied;
- in the second phase, the share of international nights by resort, by type of accommodation — hotel and non-hotel — and by category (5-4 star hotels, 3 star hotels, 2-1 star hotels; campsites/holiday villages and rented dwellings) over the total for each district was adopted. The accommodation establishments were chosen by random procedure. However, some of them had to be replaced afterwards, because of low co-operation;
- in the third phase, the seasonal peculiarities of international flows, related to the specific tourist product and attractions offered by each resort, were taken into account. The monthly share of nights in each category of accommodation over the total nights registered in that category during the surveyed period was calculated and used.

The questionnaire has been divided into two main forms. The first one collects information on the tourist interviewed (country of residence, socio-economic status, etc.), the travel party, (the number of people with whom the tourist interviewed spends the holiday and shares the expenses: e.g. the members of the same family) and the holiday (package holiday or not, motivations, length of stay, means of transport used, typology of accommodation chosen, etc.). This information allows us to evaluate to what extent these characteristics can influence the choice of goods and services consumed at the destination, which was the object of the second part of the questionnaire. In detail, the second form shows a large list of expenses tourists can make on holiday. The main list includes 17 tourist expenditure items, described in Table 1. For each of them a further breakdown has been arranged, to reach a maximum of 46 items.

The questionnaire was distributed at a sample of selected accommodation establishments. A group of interviewers (or the staff of the establishments, where possible) handed it out to a random sample of tourists at their arrival. Tourists were asked to read it carefully and to fill the first form by themselves. Then, the interviewers arranged the interview plan, by agreeing with both operators and tourists upon the best time -- preferably the day of the departure or the day before at the most -- to fill the expense form, to check responses and to complete doubtful questions<sup>1</sup>. This procedure allowed larger representativeness of the sample and higher response rates, as well as detailed information on purchases made. The recruiting of skilled interviewers ensured more accurate data collection and just-in-time controls on possible relationships between expenses met and tourists' features. However, what is an advantage in terms of quality output -- a highly complex survey plan and the use of qualified personnel -- represents at the same time a disadvantage in terms of organisation costs.

#### 4. TOURIST CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPENDITURE BEHAVIOUR. THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The results of the survey shows the consumption behaviour of tourists who decide to spend at least one night in the Veneto region, by country of origin, tourist district (art cities, lake, sea, mountains and spa resorts), holiday resort and type of accommodation chosen.

The economic importance of international tourism demand comes from the fact that, being similar to exports, it has to be added in total to the final demand expressed by residents. This leads to study the expenditure behaviour of tourists coming from abroad as separate from that of domestic tourism. Furthermore, the dominance of German-speaking tourists over the regional tourism market has suggested us to analyse their consumption model separately from the rest of the international demand. Apart from nationality, the different purchasing behaviour which usually characterises each kind of holiday -- cultural, seaside, mountain, thermal, lake -- has been approximated by analysing separately the tourism consumption in the five corresponding regional areas (art cities, sea, mountains, spa resorts, lake).

Given these elements, the average expenditure met by each tourist holidaying in the Veneto region is about 97.45 US\$ gross per day, that corresponds to 84.96 US\$ net<sup>2</sup> (Table 1).

<sup>1</sup> "The tourists' recall of expenditure deteriorates as the period between the time the expenditure was incurred and the time details are being asked for lengthens" (WTO, 1995). Consequently, tourists were encouraged to read the questionnaire carefully, to collect bills, receipts and any other documentation of their purchases and to record their expenses day by day.

<sup>2</sup> The difference between gross and net total is that the gross total includes both the travel costs met to reach the region and the expenses for moving inside the region, while the net total includes only the second ones. The reason of this distinction is that the cost of return travel (by air, rail or sea) are generally met by the visitor before departure and in the country/region of origin. Consequently, they should not be counted in the analysis of inbound expenditure.



**Tab. 1 Estimated average daily per capita expenditure: total population, by nationality and by tourist district (in US\$)**  
*Precision of the estimates (percentage variation coefficient)*

EXPENDITURE ITEMS	TOTAL	Germans/ Austrians	Other Foreigners	Italians	Art Cities	Lake	Seaside	Moun- tains	Spa Resorts
Food and Drinks	5.68 2.8	6.47 3.7	5.91 5.5	5.01 5.1	3.71 15.6	6.75 5.1	6.29 3.3	5.19 10.6	1.54 14.2
Tobacco	0.81 7.5	0.96 18.4	0.49 8.3	0.87 6.3	0.71 11.3	0.88 20.5	0.60 6.7	0.93 10.3	0.91 11.9
Clothing and footwear	5.93 5.5	8.18 5.9	6.64 14.6	3.99 9.7	10.60 13.7	4.67 8.0	2.88 6.2	3.91 10.4	14.90 12.1
Furniture, furnishing and household Equipment and operation	0.16 7.4	0.07 13.6	0.09 19.0	0.26 9.2	0.02 36.6	0.05 42.0	0.20 8.5	0.38 16.7	0.07 5*1
Health goods and services	0.26 10.3	0.27 11.5	0.07 17.0	0.36 15.5	0.31 58.8	0.15 17.8	0.13 11.6	0.35 16.9	1.04 15.4
Operating and maintenance expenses For means of transport	6.18 2.9	8.29 3.2	6.47 5.0	4.56 6.8	7.87 15.1	6.24 6.1	3.95 3.7	4.86 8.3	7.22 6.5
Purchase of transport services	14.37 5.4	5.12 7.7	46.65 6.2	3.84 18.8	94.74 10.9	8.24 9.0	1.29 11.7	3.46 24.3	10.27 17.8
Of which: Local transport services	1.87 21.9	0.94 8.1	5.31 32.4	0.71 13.2	11.23 29.2	- -	- -	- -	- -
Communications	0.44 12.5	0.53 31.2	0.33 10.3	0.43 7.7	0.44 18.2	0.31 9.4	0.36 6.8	0.37 15.4	0.35 17.2
Radio-TV equipment and other recreational goods	5.99 5.6	5.65 8.7	9.95 10.4	4.14 9.3	17.34 9.1	3.13 11.4	2.22 8.4	5.50 22.5	7.09 17.6
Books, newspapers and magazines	0.99 10.7	1.03 30.5	0.88 9.8	1.03 7.0	1.31 13.0	0.63 7.2	0.66 8.9	0.96 8.9	1.38 9.6
Education, entertainment and other recreational services	4.43 3.4	5.30 4.0	3.39 5.7	4.37 6.5	3.46 9.9	2.48 9.5	1.57 7.0	5.60 13.8	25.39 3.7
of which: Specific expenses in each tourist district	2.61 4.7	3.37 5.1	1.34 10.3	2.75 8.4	- -	0.28 16.6	0.39 8.9	4.27 15.3	23.08 3.5
Personal hygiene goods and services	0.92 6.4	0.93 6.5	0.62 14.2	1.07 10.7	0.80 33.6	0.70 11.0	0.73 8.4	0.91 12.1	2.46 15.1
Hotels and Public shops	35.45 0.9	33.16 1.3	42.87 1.6	33.14 1.6	73.23 2.1	28.43 1.9	21.44 1.2	32.54 3.2	65.70 1.2
	15.00 1.9	14.33 3.3	24.23 2.4	10.63 4.1	42.69 2.6	12.28 3.7	7.08 3.3	7.48 7.4	10.38 5.6
Goods and services not elsewhere classified	0.84 6.4	1.07 11.1	0.73 10.9	0.75 10.0	1.18 19.0	0.60 16.5	0.35 12.5	0.62 12.2	2.80 8.7
Gross Total	<b>97.45</b> 1.3	<b>91.37</b> 1.8	<b>149.30</b> 2.7	<b>74.43</b> 2.1	<b>258.41</b> 4.4	<b>75.55</b> 2.1	<b>49.75</b> 1.5	<b>73.07</b> 5.2	<b>151.51</b> 2.5
Net Total	<b>84.96</b> 1.2	<b>87.19</b> 1.8	<b>107.97</b> 2.7	<b>71.30</b> 1.9	<b>167.03</b> 3.5	<b>75.55</b> 2.1	<b>49.75</b> 1.5	<b>73.07</b> 5.2	<b>151.51</b> 2.5

Considering the regional average and gross total, Transport expenses (20.55 US\$) account for 21% of the total; Accommodation expenses (35.45 US\$) for 36%; Food and Drink for 21% (20.68 US\$, including both Food and Drinks — 5.68 US\$ — and refreshments in Public Shops — 15.00 US\$) and Shopping for 15% (15.50 US\$, including clothing and footwear, jewellery, souvenirs, gifts, photographic and video equipment and goods). Furthermore, about 4.43 US\$ are spent in Recreation services, item which includes both costs for sports and recreational-cultural activities (tickets for museums, theatres, fun parks, etc.) and those which specifically refer to the type of holiday destination chosen (beach, mountain, thermal, etc.): expenses for the access to bathing establishments, ski lifts and thermal treatments. Finally, the expenses for Other goods and services not elsewhere classified are about 0.84 US\$.

On the other hand, considering the net total, the weight of Transports falls to 9.5% while Accommodation rises to 42%, Food and Drinks and Shopping to 24% and 17%, respectively.

#### 4.1. Expenditure behaviour by nationality

Other conditions being equal, the amount and composition of the expenditure mix vary first of all according to tourists' origin and holiday habits. While domestic and German-speaking tourists present a traditional consumption model (long-stay beach holiday receives, on the average, still 50% of preferences), the prevalence of cultural motivation among Other Foreigners suggests a high-mobility tourism model, with a significant component of "package" tourists. In detail, Germans/Austrians and Italians generally belong to the medium class and spend about two weeks in the destination chosen. Besides a "sun & sea" holiday, the first ones choose to stay in a lake or spa resort, or a cultural tour (these typologies have a share of around 12-13% each), while the second ones opt for a holiday in the mountains (30.6%). Both of them usually travel by private car and have a low attitude towards package holiday (13.5% of the German-speaking tourists, 4% of the Italian ones).

On the contrary, Other Foreigners (the rest of the European and the non-European customers) have, on average, a higher socio-economic profile. They choose the Veneto region above all for cultural reasons (45.2%) and for beach resorts (34.2%). More varied is the choice of means of transport used: although the majority opts for private car (53.7%), a significant share reaches the region by plane (24.6%) or by train (12.7%). The latter modes are replaced by coach, public bus and, again, train to arrive at the final destination. Over a third of those clients apply to an intermediary (tour operator or travel agency) to plan the holiday (in 90% of the cases of foreign nationality) and about 72% of them choose an "all-inclusive" formula.

Given these profiles, the total average per capita expenditure met daily by Other Foreigners is higher than that of the other two segments: 149.30 US\$ gross (equal to 107.97 US\$ net) compared to 91.37 US\$ for Germans/Austrians (87.19 US\$ net) and 74.43 US\$ for Italians (71.30 US\$ net). This gap is mostly due to the higher

transport costs met by other European and Extra-European tourists, combined with their higher expenditure attitude. In detail, total expenses for Transports amount to 53.12 US\$, fed by air fares (it is 13.41 US\$ for Germans/Austrians and 8.40 US\$ for Italians), while Accommodation expenses are equal to 42.87 US\$, compared to an average of 33.15 US\$ for the Italian and German-speaking tourists.

As far as Food and Drinks are concerned, Other Foreigners tend to spend more in restaurants and bars. For Shopping the difference is due to the purchase of jewellery, watches, souvenirs, etc., that is equal to 9.95 US\$ per day, on average, compared to 5.65 US\$ for German-speaking tourists and 4.13 US\$ for the Italian ones.

The situation is different for Recreational and Cultural Activities: Germans/Austrians and Italians spend, on average, more than the others do (respectively 5.30 US\$, 4.37 US\$ and 3.39 US\$), especially for specific expenses related to the holiday district (access fees to bathing establishments, ski lifts, thermal treatments). These results are summarised in Table 1.

#### 4.2. Expenditure behaviour by type of holiday

Going to the analysis by type of holiday, a broad range of behaviour can be shown, coming from beach tourists, on the one hand, to cultural tourists, on the other. Beach tourists usually holiday with the family; spend a medium-long time period in the destination (about 15 days), come generally from German-speaking countries (Germany and Austria cover 60% of total nights), prefer travelling by private car and avoid package solutions (only 8% apply to a travel agency). Cultural tourists would rather visit several short-stay destinations (about 3-4 days for each), come from other European and Extra-European countries, have a high propensity to spend (medium-high educational and professional level), overnight in luxury and high category hotels, use collective means of transport and in most cases opt for a package tour.

These profiles justify different consumption patterns (Table 1). The daily average per capita expenditure met by a tourist holidaying in cities of arts is about 258.41 US\$ gross and 167.03 US\$ net, versus 49.75 US\$ spent by people staying in beach resorts<sup>3</sup>. In cities of art, Transport costs cover a good 40% of the gross total, followed by Accommodation (28%) and Food (18%) expenses — the latter including drinks, food and snacks in restaurants, pizzerias, bars and other public shops —, and by Shopping with 12%. Considering the net total, the Transport share falls down to 7%, while that of the other items increases: Accommodation to 44%, Food to 28% and Shopping to 18%. In cities of art, the amount of Food and Shopping expenses are higher than in the other districts, consistently with the purchase habits and choices of cultural tourists, while lower seems to be recreational spending (2%).

<sup>3</sup> In seaside, mountain, lake and spa resorts the gross and net total are the same, as we have assumed there is no difference between gross and net Transport expenses. The low incidence of return travel by air, train or sea (see Note 2) and the difficulty in distinguishing petrol costs met to reach the destination from those borne to move locally, are the main reasons for this choice.

On the contrary, tourists who choose a beach holiday spend 70% of their daily average expenditure on Accommodation (43%) and Food (27%), 14% on Shopping activities and 3% on Recreational occupations, inclusive of deck chair, beach umbrella and bathing-hut hire costs. The prevalent use of private car explains the modest amount of Transport costs; nearly 80% of which is due to petrol costs.

Tourists in spa resorts come above all from Germany and Austria, most of them are elderly and of medium-high socio-economic status. Almost 97% of them choose the full board in hotels, 70% use private car and opt for independent holidays. They spend about 151.51 US\$ daily, 43% of which for Accommodation, 15% for Thermal Treatments and 1.6% for Recreational Activities. The relative lower entertainment expenses, probably due to tourists' age (and then to their need of relaxation after each treatment) can explain the importance of Shopping (18%) that seems to be the typical "recreational" activity in this area. Purchasing mainly concerns clothing and footwear (58%), jewellery, watches and souvenirs (28%). On the average, the expenses for beauty and personal hygiene products (e.g. cosmetics, hairdresser and other personal care services, excluding those furnished by thermal centres) are higher than in the other districts. On the contrary, expenses for Food and Drinks outside the hotel are lower (8%) since the majority of tourists prefers full board accommodation.

Tourists in lake resorts come from German speaking countries too; of medium economic level, they travel by private car and choose both hotel and non-hotel accommodation. They like to combine traditional seaside practices with water sports. They spend 75.55 US\$ daily, 37.6% for Accommodation, 25% for Food, 19% for Transport. As far as the remaining costs, 13% of the total daily expenditure is devoted to Shopping activities, 50% of which for clothing and footwear. Finally, Recreational Activities (including sports training, visit to the local fun-park, concerts, etc.) count for 3%.

Finally, tourists in mountain resorts come generally from Italy (93% of total nights) and present a medium socio-economic status. 90% of them travel by private car and a good 70% chooses non-hotel accommodation (campsites and rented dwellings). They spend 73.07 US\$ on a daily average versus 49.75 US\$ in beach resorts. Although the two vacation models are very similar, this disparity is mainly due both to the different accommodation and recreation costs specific of the mountain district. 44.5% of daily expenditure is devoted to Accommodation, 17% to Food expenses and 7.7% to Recreational Activities (about 80% of which linked to ski lifts and chair lifts costs). Shopping represents nearly 17% of the daily expenditure, 45% of which for sporting equipment purchases and another 32% for clothing and footwear. As far as transport is concerned, the amount spent for private car (petrol costs, parking fees, etc.) is higher than that registered in beach resorts. Given the geography of the mountain district, tourists usually show a higher attitude to move and to use the car for local excursions.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis carried out in the Veneto region has shown the consistency of a survey at accommodation establishments for monitoring characteristics and consumption behaviour of inbound tourists in an open area.

The questionnaire design has allowed researchers to cross tourists' expenditure habits with their socio-cultural features (socio-economic status, trip and holiday characteristics, etc.), taking into account first of all the country of origin and the type of holiday chosen (cultural, seaside, mountains, etc.). The opportunity to produce good information on the macroeconomic impact of tourism depends heavily on the availability of reliable estimates on tourism consumption.

This survey represents the first step towards the setting up of a Regional Tourism Information System, which is crucial not only for researchers but also for national and local administrations, tourism organisations, tourism economic operators (accommodation establishments, tour operators, transport companies, etc.) and, more generally, for all activities related to tourism (banks, insurance companies, etc.). The systematic collection and distribution of homogeneous data on tourism are at the basis of suitable marketing plans as well as of management, planning and investment strategies.

A further step is then represented by the development of an appropriate approach to estimate the economic role of each demand segment and the plot of interactions going from tourists' expenditure behaviour to the tourism industry as a whole. In the Veneto region, the multisectoral-biregional input-output model extended to tourism, VERDITOUR (Veneto-Rest of Italy-Tourism) has been applied.

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### Sažetak

#### **PRIKUPLJANJE STATISTIČKIH PODATAKA MEĐUNARODNOG TURISTIČKOG PROMETA NA OTVORENOM PROSTORU: METODOLOGIJA I PRIMJENA. SLUČAJ REGIJE VENETO**

Danas je opće poznata potreba za prikupljanjem informacija o potrošnji stranih turista, što je ključno za ocjenjivanje makroekonomskog utjecaja turizma na GDP, zaposlenost i bilancu plaćanja u jednom području (otvorenom ili zatvorenom).

Prikaz istraživanja o potrošnji stranih turista u Regiji Veneto, koje je u radu prezentirano, predstavlja prvi korak prema razvoju informacijskog sustava same regije, koji ne samo da je koristan istraživačima i znanstvenicima nego i svim javnim i privatnim poduzetnicima turističkog menadžmenta, marketinga i planiranja.

U radu su opisani ciljevi, metodologija i organizacija tog istraživanja, koje je dalo odgovarajući analitički okvir za sustavno prikupljanje podataka o karakteristikama i potrošnji stranih turista.

Ključne riječi: turizam unutar granica, otvoreni prostor, turistička potrošnja, istraživanje posjetitelja, regionalni turistički informacijski sustav