

HABILITATION THESES BOOKLET

The Role of Tourism Higher Education in Developing Student Competencies to Drive Positive Change

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1. The Role of Tourism Higher Education in Developing Student Competencies to Drive Positive Change

1.1. Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, tourism has been the most dynamically growing industry, one of the new centers of gravity in the global economy, with spectacular growth in the service sector within national economies and, within that, the continuous strengthening of the role of tourism. (Michalkó, 2010). The study by Csapó and Lőrincz (2020) points out that, parallel to the dynamic growth, the demand and supply sides have undergone significant changes in both space and time, in terms of both quantity and quality.

These changes are also reflected in how jobs in the tourism industry have evolved in recent decades. Primarily technological changes have contributed to the emergence of new jobs, and new ways of performing already existing jobs (Bogdány et al., 2023). The unprecedented rate of growth in information technology has resulted in the need for digital skills, and due to societal changes, soft skills such as problem solving and empathy have come to the forefront. Last but not least, the increased emphasis on sustainable development influenced the changes in competency requirement in tourism employment.

Tourism higher education has a significant role in preparing the future tourism professionals for a changed (or changing) labour market. However, the question emerges how higher education can cope with the pace of technological and societal changes. Research focusing on education and

competency development (Tran, 2018; Herbert et al., 2020) concludes that there is a competency gap between the competencies of graduates and the requirements of the labour market.

The habilitation thesis aims to present significant examples of my scientific contribution to tourism and competency development research based on the roles, tasks and activities outlined in the section about my scientific career.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured to a sequence of research tourism competency development, establishing the foundations competency development in higher education, proposing a novel methodology that can be utilised to rank the key competencies required from tourism graduates, and providing insight into research findings on two selected competencies.

1. The first part of the thesis focuses on the gap between the competencies developed by Hungarian universities in compliance with the national educational and outcome requirement and the competencies that tourism businesses and organisations require from tourism graduates, based on the analysis of job portals and focus group interviews conducted with representatives of the tourism industry.
2. The second part discusses a proposed methodology for assessing the importance of and ranking competencies to be developed based on Q-methodology. There are some examples of the use of Q-methodology in nursing education and teacher evaluation, and it has been tested in Hungary for competencies to be developed in the course of human resource management higher education, the results of which suggest that it can serve as a useful tool for assessing the importance of competencies for tourism higher education.
3. The final part of the thesis will provide examples of research into key competencies that enable tourism graduates to create positive change; and also enhance their employability. The research on university students' willingness to volunteer in ECoC events highlights the significance of volunteering in instilling values of social responsiveness and empathy in university students and providing opportunities to enhance their skills. This goes beyond their personal gain as students also contribute to creating positive societal impact by undertaking volunteering tasks. The research on visitor attitudes towards sustainability awareness initiatives at a popular music festival provides insight into the gap between the perceived importance of sustainability initiatives and the respondents' actual contribution to sustainable consumption.

2. Assessing the competency gap between tourism higher education in Hungary and the expectations of the labour market

2.1. Introduction

The 21st century has experienced an unprecedented rate of technological development (it is also referred to as the age of accelerated technological innovations (OECD, 2019), which has brought along significant changes in the labour market. Jobs have appeared that we would have not even dreamt of some decades ago, and the way we do our jobs has also changed.

Such changes should be followed by the education sector in order to prepare future generations for working in a changed environment (Bogdány et al, 2012). Recent research reveals that the importance of soft skills has grown significantly in the recent years (Balogh et al, 2012; Herbert et al, 2020; Bogdány et al, 2021). The question emerges how higher education can cope with the pace of technological and societal changes, if at all. Various research focusing on education and competency development (Tran, 2018; Herbert et al., 2020) refers to a competency gap that can be observed between the competencies of graduates and the requirements of the labour market.

In the tourism industry the diversification of tasks and jobs is also rather apparent. While 20 years ago tourism businesses used to employ a marketing manager, now this job has been split different jobs such as online marketing expert, social media manager or content developer, just to name a few recently emerged tasks. Furthermore, the development of online solutions enhanced the need for digital skills, while soft skills such as problem solving, social perceptiveness and empathy have also become important competencies as customer needs have become more complex. Last but not least, the increased need for sustainable development has also impacted on the skills requirements in tourism employment (<https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/>)

Recent research within the Competency Map subtheme of the of Social Innovation National Laboratory aimed to assess the potential gap between the competencies developed by business higher education as defined by the Hungarian educational and outcome requirements, involving all the bachelor programmes of the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pannonia, and the expectations of the labour market. The Competency Map research throughout all business programmes relied on the OECD competency definition and its threefold classification into 'knowledge', 'skills and abilities' and 'attitudes and values' types of competencies.

For the research on tourism competencies, the following research questions have been formed:

Q1: What are the competency expectations of tourism labour market?

Q2: Is there a gap between the competencies developed by tourism higher education and the expectations of tourism and hospitality labour market?

Desk research incorporating content analysis of the national educational and outcome requirements of the tourism and hospitality curriculum as well as of job advertisements and job skills requirements; and focus group interviews conducted with tourism professionals working in different areas of tourism and hospitality will inform the research.

2.2. Literature review

2.2.1. Notion of competency

According to the Education Policy Committee (Taguma (OECD) – Rychen, 2016, p.3) „a competency is defined as the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values”. This competency definition rests on three pillars, which are defined as follows:

- „Knowledge includes theoretical concepts and ideas as well as practical understanding based on the experience of having performed certain tasks ... disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic and procedural.” (Speiser – Lang (OECD), 2018, p.72)
- „Skills are the ability and capacity to carry out processes and be able to use one’s knowledge in a responsible way to achieve a goal ... cognitive and meta-cognitive skills; social and emotional skills; and physical and practical skills.” (Speiser – Lang (OECD), 2018, p.85)
- „Attitudes and values ... refer to the principles and beliefs that influence one’s choices, judgements, behaviours and actions on the path towards individual, societal and environmental well-being.” (Speiser – Lang, 2018, p. 101.)

Although it is inevitable that knowledge type competencies are fundamental in being able to perform certain tasks, the role of soft skills has gained significantly more importance. Problem solving, critical thinking and technology use have also been gaining importance (Csizmadia – Raffay, 2019), while newly emerging skills include resilience, stress tolerance, flexibility and active learning.

2.2.2. Competency requirements in the tourism industry

The tourism industry, just as other industries, has also experienced significant developments in the recent years, both in terms of the further diversification of tasks and jobs, and in terms of technological and societal changes that impacted on how jobs are done.

A European research partnership, Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG), has been established recently to unveil the future skills that the next generation of tourism professionals will need to be empowered with. The key aim was to establish a collaborative and productive relationship between education and industry, and as an outcome, to provide employees, employers, entrepreneurs, teachers, trainers and students with a set of core NTG modules in digital, green and social skills. (<https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/>) These results have been incorporated into the Hungarian National Tourism Strategy 2023, the Turizmus 2.0 strategy document, which summarises the expected future skills in tourism and hospitality in three core areas (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Future skills in tourism and hospitality

Digital skills	Green skills	Social skills
Programming	Knowing environmentally friendly detergents	Team spirit
Digital content creating	Selective waste collection, Recycling	Problem solving
Personalisation	ECO certificates	Empathy
Big Data analysis	Environmental awareness	Tolerance
Cloud-based software usage	Knowing related regulations and standards	General knowledge
Effective social media usage	Renewable energy usage	Adaptability and flexibility
Mobile applications usage	Knowing local produce	Openness
	Preferring reusable tools	Conflict management
		Awareness of dietary requirements
		Proactivity in guest relations

Source: Own editing based on Turizmus 2.0, p. 131

2.2.3. Competency development in higher education

In higher education programmes, designing of the education process on the foundation of the curriculum starts with the development of learning goals and outcomes (Appleton et al., 2006). As the 21st century is characterised by globalism, constant change and networked operations, higher education empowers graduate to be able to respond to the fundamental global and national trends and to the challenges of the future if they prepare graduates for interdisciplinary and problem-oriented thinking, as well as for working in teams (OECD, 2019).

Higher education institutions in Hungary operate along the national regulations both in academic and management terms. Curriculum content for each degree programme is defined by the decree 18/2016 (VIII.5) issued by the Ministry of Human Resources.

2.2.4. Competency gap

Even though the key aim of higher education institutions is to train graduates for the labour market (Brown, 2019), due to the high pace of development they often fail to capture the changes in the skills expectations of the labour market, which in turn also impacts on the employability of students (Harman et al., 2010; Jackson, 2016).

Mourshed et al. (2012) claim that employers usually perceive the insufficiency of skills among the employees, while Conrad and Newberry (2012), Everson (2014) and Adrian (2017) also report that a competency gap exists between employer needs and the skill sets of university graduates.

2.3. Research methods

The research rests on four pillars to detect the key competencies required from tourism and hospitality professionals. The research started with desk research, examining the competencies identified by three distinct sources: 1) the educational and outcome requirements for the tourism and hospitality bachelor programmes defined by the 18/2016 (VIII.5) Higher Education Decree issued by the Ministry of Human Resources; 2) the O*NET American job portal that lists the skills expectations of various tourism and hospitality jobs (as universities should aim to train graduates fit for international labour markets as well) ; 3) job advertisements on most frequently used Hungarian tourism portals (turizmus.com and turizmusonline.hu) to assess the most frequently required skills. Content analysis was used for the analysis of the above sources.

Furthermore, as the 4th pillar, focus group interviews were conducted with professionals representing different areas of business, different size companies as well as not-for-profit organisations to reveal the skills they would require from tourism and hospitality graduates with maximum one year experience. Altogether 11 participants shared their views, representing a wide range of tourism-related organisations:



2.4. Research findings

When assess the gap between the competencies developed by higher education institutions (Figure 2.1.) and the competency expectations of the labour market, the result gained from the three distinct labour market sources are presented jointly in the summative Table 2.2.

Figure 2.1. Competencies developed in alignment with the tourism and hospitality educational and outcome requirements



Source: Own editing, 2025

Table 2.2. below summarises the competency requirements of the labour market, indicating the sources of responses.

Table 2.2. Summary of the competency expectations of the labour market

Competency	O*NET portal	Job adverts	Focus groups
<i>Knowledge</i>			
Tourism/hospitality proficiency	x	x	x
English	x	x	x
Tourism/hospitality specific software			x
System of tourism			x
IT (social media, online meeting platforms)		x	x
Geography	x		x
Marketing and sales	x		
Administration	x		x
<i>Skills and abilities</i>			
Problem solving	x	x	x
Communication	x	x	x
Teamwork		x	x
Working independently	x	x	
Active listening	x		x
Assertive communication	x		
Conflict resolution			x
Time management	x		
Coordination	x		
Digital skills			x
<i>Attitudes and values</i>			
Guest (service) orientation	x	x	x
Empathy	x	x	x
Flexibility	x	x	x
Tolerance		x	x
Openness			x
Proactivity		x	x
Stress management			x
Problem sensitivity	x		
Social perceptiveness	x		
Precision		x	
Success orientation		x	
Resilience			
Tidy appearance		x	

Source: Own editing (2025)

The findings reveal a clear gap between the educational and outcome requirements and the expectations of the labour market, both in terms of the proportions of ‘knowledge’, ‘skills and abilities’ and ‘attitudes and values’ type competencies, and both in terms of concrete competencies.

While the educational and outcome requirements place significant emphasis on knowledge and proficiency in wide-ranging areas, and the ability to utilize this knowledge in practice, the labour

market expectations, especially the job advertisements, contain more ‘attitude and value’ type competencies.

As for individual competencies, in the knowledge competency category, all four components of the research argue for the importance of tourism proficiency, English (foreign language) and IT (including knowledge of different tourism specific software). A noticeable gap can be observed in general business knowledge developed by foundation modules such as mathematics and statistics or methodology: while these are integral parts of the educational and outcome requirements, neither of the labour market sources indicated these as competencies they would require from graduates.

More overlap can be observed in the skills and abilities’ type competencies. Problem solving features in all four lists, communication is also a key competency that all the investigated sources regarded as important. A striking difference can be detected in the case of critical thinking, which is a key competency to be developed according to the educational and outcome criteria but none of the analysed sources representing the labour market require this skill.

Attitudes and values also show remarkable similarities, however the list of expected skills in this category is most extensive in the case of job advertisements. Guest/service orientation is the absolute overlap, but empathy and flexibility were further core attitude expectations which at least three sources confirmed.

2.5. Conclusions

The rate of technological development has resulted in significant changes in the labour market, both in terms of the appearance of brand-new jobs, and also in the way jobs are performed. Furthermore, the work environment has also changed significantly in the recent years, working in networked organisations, and working in teams have become prevalent, and the need for problem-oriented thinking has become more important, while the COVID-19 pandemic has also brought new challenges. The role of higher education is to develop those skills that foster the employability of graduates however, it poses a great challenge to respond to the impacts of the accelerated rate of development.

The results reveal that tourism proficiency, IT and English as a foreign language are the core knowledge type competencies, and also indicate the growing importance of soft skills, abilities as well as attitudes. Problem-solving skill, guest focus, empathy and flexibility were considered as key skills in the tourism industry, alongside flexibility. Although the research findings are not generalisable, they provide a starting point for a similar research involving a wide range of stakeholders, which could bring more benefits to the future of tourism higher educations.

2.6. Proposed theses

Based on these, I propose the following thesis statement:

1.a) The gap between competencies developed by tourism higher education in accordance with the educational and outcome requirements and the labour market expectations can be detected both in the different proportion of knowledge, skills and abilities and attitudes and values type competencies, and in the importance of individual competencies.

1.b) Tourism higher education places roughly equal emphasis on the three types of competencies, while the labour market requires more soft skills, especially attitudes and values type competencies from tourism graduates.

3. A proposed methodology for mapping and ranking competencies that (business) graduates need

3.1. Introduction

The Competency Map sub-theme of the Social Innovation National Laboratory project aimed to assess the potential gap between the competencies developed by business higher education as defined by the Hungarian educational and outcome requirements, and the expectations of the labour market, for all the bachelor programmes of the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pannonia.

The research presented here aims to propose a methodology that can identify key competencies by ranking them according to importance, which can help to verify the set of competencies that business higher education should aim to develop. The pilot research assessed competencies that Human Resource Management graduates need to match the labour market expectations; the current thesis focuses on the applied methodology and its implications for other business higher education programmes, including tourism and hospitality, therefore HRM competencies are mentioned only as examples to illustrate the steps of the Q-methodology research.

3.2. Literature review

3.2.1. Assessing competency needs

Successful operation of organisations highly depends on the performance of its employees. However, the performance of workers is influenced considerably by the existence of professional knowledge, abilities and other necessary competencies (Vasanth - Bano, 2019). Employers frequently perceive the insufficiency of competencies among the employees (Mourshed et al., 2012). Moreover, research studies consistently report that higher education graduates are increasingly unable to perform work duties effectively (Tran, 2018).

The importance of different competencies may differ from organization to organization. Study by McLean et al. (2005) confirmed the suggestion that different groups of individuals perceive competencies differently and “ranking of competencies is more complex than previous studies have presented” (McLean, et al., 2005, p. 162). Examining the importance of specific competencies from different points of view, using the Q-methodology to explore individual opinions, allows for a well-founded understanding of it.

3.2.2. Q-methodology description

Ranking competencies by using Q-methodology previously were applied in different fields e.g. nurse education research (Hensel et al., 2022; Tornwall - McDaniel, 2022), evaluating critical thinking competency (Gyenes, 2021); and teacher evaluation (Rodl et al., 2020). The Q-methodology has a number of advantages (mixed method, reliable compilation of concourse, few participants (Exel - Graaf, 2005; Watts - Stenner, 2012; Morea, 2022) that a higher educational institution could utilize to understand the stakeholders' viewpoint on expected competencies. As Aldamen et al. (2021) mentioned it could be useful to redesign curricula.

The first step of conducting Q-methodology is the concourse which is compiled based on the statements that are formulated from various standpoints (e.g. interview, relevant literature) and cover as many sub-topics as possible. After the concourse the clarification of the statements is the next step, called Q-set or Q-sample (Coogan - Herrington, 2011). The carefully selected representatives are asked to sort the Q-sample based on their own perspectives (Lee, 2017). At the end of the process factor-analysis needs to be conducted in order to find a reasonable number of attitudes (factors) among the participants.

Validity, reliability and generalizability are important in every methodology. Content validity of the Q-sample is addressed by literature review and by obtaining expert advice, while face validity is ensured by editing the statements slightly and item validity means that it does not apply subjectivity (Valenta - Wigger, 1997). Q-methodology studies can rarely be generalized because of the explanatory nature of the research questions, therefore, it is not designed for large nonrandomized participant samples (Watts - Stenner, 2005).

3.3. Methodology

For the pilot research to identify and rank important HRM competencies Q-methodology was used. We followed the recommended steps of Q-methodology by Paige and Morin (2014) (Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. The flow of Q-methodology

The flow of Q-methodology	
Development of Concourse	The process how Q-sample was created: Content analysis of Hungarian educational requirements Content analysis of job adverts, O*NET portal Focus group interviews
Compilation of Q-Sample (Q-Set)	40 competency definition were compiled
Selection of P-Sample (P-Set)	Selection of the sample of respondents
Q-Sorts (Pilot)	Participants sorting the definitions according to the importance
Further development	Analysis and interpretations before final sorting

Source: Bogdány, Cserháti and Raffay-Danyi (2023)

The following sections present the different steps of the applied Q-methodology.

3.3.1. Methods used during the development of the concourse

Content analysis

The Hungarian educational competency requirements defined for the HRM higher education was the starting point of the content analysis. Altogether 27 competencies were identified, grouped into the OECD categories.

In order to reveal the expectations of the labour market from different sources, job advertisements were extracted first from several Hungarian job portals. A summative list of competencies was designed, where repeatedly occurring competencies and similar expressions referring to the same competency were combined. As a result of data filtering, 65 different competencies were identified, based on which a frequency analysis was carried out. Beside job ads, data of the international online database Occupational Information Network (O*NET) was also studied, to reveal requirements across an international basis. Similarly to the analysis of job advertisements, we listed the expected skills, knowledge and abilities in case of relevant occupations. After deleting repetitions and merging competencies with the same meaning we identified 36 relevant competencies.

Focus groups

To gain a deeper understanding of the expectations of the labour market, focus group interviews were conducted with HRM professionals, representing both public and private sector organisations. During the selection of the participants, we were conscious about the size of the organization as HRM tasks may be significantly different in micro- or small organisations and in large multinational corporations. Altogether 13 participants shared their views, identifying 22 competencies.

3.3.2. Compilation of the Q-Sample (Q-Set)

The competency clusters of Hungarian educational competency requirements provided clear definitions on knowledge, skills and attitudes developed by higher education programmes. Competency requirements mentioned in the focus group interviews needed to be integrated. After agreement on competency definitions based on the focus groups, we started to compile the specifications gathered from the Hungarian education and outcome requirements, O*NET database and focus group interviews to formulate integrated definitions of competencies.

3.3.3. Selection of the P-Sample (P-Set)

Significant characteristic of the Q-methodology is that only a few respondents need to be involved in order to identify preferences behind the different responses (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008). Brown (1993) indicated that 40-60 participants is appropriately enough to conduct the analyses.

The pilot research aimed to test Q-methodology as a process for HRM competency evaluation, therefore the study demonstrates only the pilot results of Q-sorts, and the experiences based on these results.

sorted into the not important categories. Few knowledge elements were evaluated by the participants significantly more important, such as foreign language, rules and processes of teamwork/cooperation, computer (program) knowledge, personnel and human resources. Also, we can highlight that altogether skills were evaluated more significantly important than knowledge elements. Assertive and basic communication skills were significantly important based the evaluation of participants.

The current thesis will not go into further detail about the results regarding competencies HRM graduates need, the current work only intended to demonstrate the applicability of Q-methodology to assess the importance of competencies in the field of business higher education.

3.5. Conclusions

The use of the Q-methodology has delivered the desired results. Even though the method is more time-consuming, both in terms of time spent with compiling the Q-set and with filling in the questionnaire, the results provide a clear picture of the hierarchy of competencies. Furthermore, the research has identified the gaps between the competency requirements of the labour market and the competencies Hungarian (HRM) higher education develops according to the national regulations, therefore the results can be utilised by the educational policy makers to ensure a better match of developed and required competencies and by universities to incorporate further competency development oriented tasks into their extra-curricular activities within their remit.

3.6. Proposed thesis

Based on these, I propose the following thesis statement:

2.) Q-methodology can be used to identify the set of key competencies that the business higher education in Hungary needs to develop to ensure a better match with expectations of the labour market, thereby enhancing the employability of business graduates, and enabling them to drive positive change.

4. Research on key competencies that enable tourism graduates to create positive change: Sustainability awareness at a popular music festival

4.1. Introduction

Sustainability, and specifically green skills, have been identified as a key competency that the next generation of tourism professionals need to possess (www.nexttourismgeneration.eu), which then have also been incorporated into the Hungarian National Tourism Strategy, *Tourism 2.0*. Research conducted within the framework of the „*Establishment of a circular economy-based sustainability competence center at the University of Pannonia*” project investigated the sustainability related

initiatives of the Street Music Festival in Veszprém, assessing the attitude of festival visitors to sustainability at the Veszprém Street Music Festival.

Although sustainable practices aiming to reduce the negative environmental impacts have been prevalent at events for over a decade now (Mair - Laing 2012; Mair - Smith 2021), initiatives focusing on the economic impacts as well as supporting the local economy and society are also gaining more emphasis in event planning and management (Andersson et al. 2015; Perry et al. 2020). Studies by Mair – Laing (2013) and Ye et al. (2020) have established that music festivals attracting larger audiences are becoming especially aware of the importance of sustainability as well as of their role in the process of raising participants' awareness of it.

Even though the research did not specifically target university students or graduates, a significant proportion of the participants of the Street Music Festival are young people including university students, which is typical of popular music festivals, the responses may provide useful insight into the sustainability related attitude of students and recent graduates.

4.2. Literature review

4.2.1. Environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainability

Sustainable practices aiming to reduce the negative environmental impacts have become key guiding principles of events (Mair - Laing 2012). In the research by Boggia et al. (2018) the terms sustainability and environmental effects are used interchangeably. Based on the focus of sustainable practices, a distinction can be made between organisations implementing green actions and organisations committed to all three pillars of sustainability in their management and operations (Mair - Jago, 2010).

Besides the green practices, initiatives focusing on the economic impacts as well as supporting the local economy and society are also gaining more emphasis in event planning and management (Andersson et al., 2015). Organisers consider the economic impacts by making sustainability equal to continuity, referring to guaranteed financial sources and income that ensures the event can be staged in the long run (Zifkos, 2015).

There is growing interest in researching the social impacts of the festivals, including how they impact on the everyday life of local residents and how they foster collaboration amongst various actors, such as local residents, local NGOs and other stakeholders.

4.2.2. Attitude of festival visitors to sustainability

The growing demand for sustainability on behalf of the participants has become a trend that facilitates or even forces the implementation of sustainable principles at events (Ye et al. 2020, Csapody et al., 2021). This demand can be traced back to the growing awareness of climate change and increasingly worrying lack of clear water and droughts in some places, and of extreme weather conditions that jeopardize the existence and staging of events. Furthermore, there is growing awareness of the impact food production on the environment, as the food and agriculture sector is responsible for a significant proportion (around 25%) of global greenhouse gas emissions (Ritchie, 2019). Due to environmental concerns and a growing awareness of healthy lifestyle, the eating habits have changed significantly in the 21st century. A reduction of certain food products, such as meat and dairy products, can be observed parallel with the growth of other types of products, such

as vegetables, plant-based drink, gluten free products (Plant Menu, limevenueportfolio.com). The growing demand for special diets has also got its roots in the growth of the proportion of people suffering from certain food allergies or intolerances (Benedé et al. 2016). More and more festivals recognise the need as well as the business potential in providing catering options to satisfy the needs of visitors with special dietary needs and preferences (van Berkel 2014; Raffay-Danyi – Ernszt, 2021).

4.2.3. Sustainability initiatives at music festival

Most of the sustainability initiatives at festivals tend to focus on the environment, aiming to reduce and mitigate the potential negative impacts of the event (Paton – McCullen 2014). Waste reduction is a key concern, which can manifest in various forms, like in reducing the amount of rubbish generated at festivals and reducing the use of plastic wherever it is possible. As Efeja et al. (2016) point out, it is of utmost importance that awareness raising programmes are delivered in the spirit of edutainment to encourage visitor participation, for example through co-creation, joint search for solutions for sustainability related challenges, creative workshops, etc.

4.3. Veszprém Street Music Festival

The Veszprém Street Music Festival Hungary is well-established in the Hungarian festival calendar since the year 2000. Unlike other music festivals, the Street Music Festival is a free event taking place on the open streets of the historic city centre of Veszprém, instead of a dedicated festival site (www.utcazene.hu). Since 2020, the Street Music Festival is part of the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 European Capital of Culture project, which has put sustainability as a key guiding principle on their flag (veszprembalaton2023.hu).

4.4. Methodology

The methodology is based on a questionnaire survey conducted during the festival in August 2020 assessing how participants rate the importance of sustainability measures and how they can contribute to sustainability. The respondents were chosen randomly at the festival site where festival volunteers assisted in recording responses on the paper-based questionnaires during the four days of the event, and the questionnaire was also available online on the www.veszprembalaton2023.hu website.

The research investigating visitor attitudes aimed to answer to the following research questions:

Q1: How important do festival visitors rate sustainability initiatives?

Q2: To what extent is the visitors' consumption at the festival site sustainable?

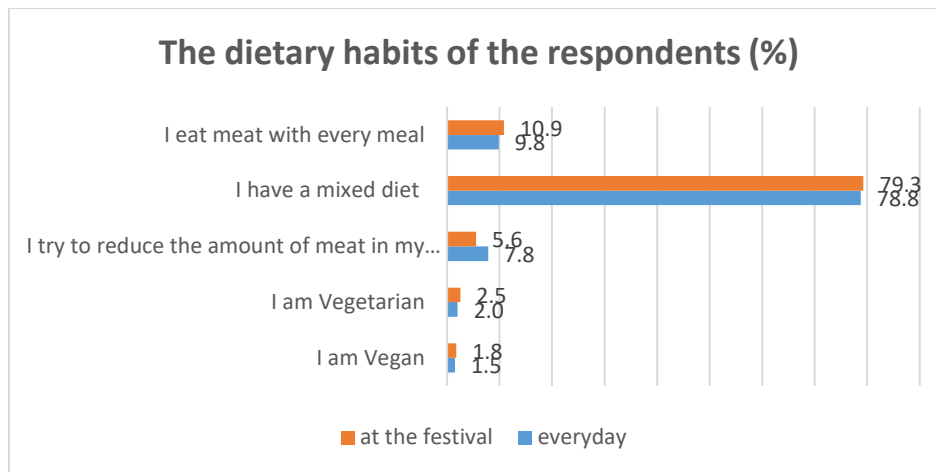
4.5. Research findings

4.5.1. Attitudes towards sustainability initiatives

The sustainable production and consumption related questions focused on food and beverage consumption, specifically also about tap water consumption, on waste recycling, on interest in the local character of the event and on the potential sustainability issues that need addressing.

The first food related questions aimed to map the respondents' dietary preferences on average weekdays and during the festival. As Figure 4.1. shows there are hardly any differences to detect between the eating habits of the two scenarios, and most of the respondents have mixed diet. The proportion of those eating reduced amounts of meat is between 6 and 8%, and 10% of the participants consume meat with every meal, while the proportion of the vegan and vegetarian respondents is just a few percent in the overall sample, which equals to 6 and 7 people respectively.

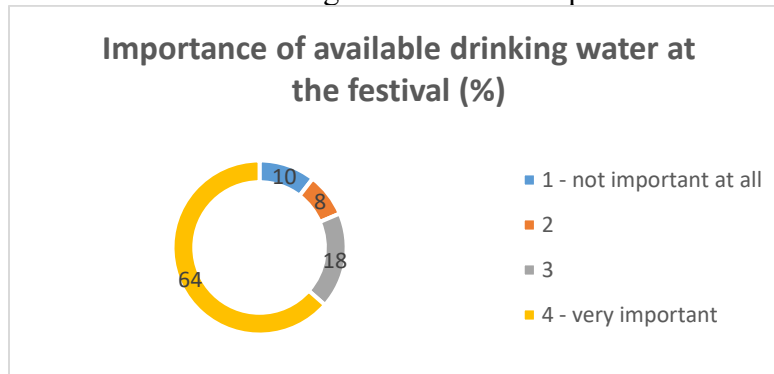
Figure 4.1. Dietary habits of visitors of the Street Music Festival



Source: Raffay-Danyi-Formádi (2022)

Another question, related to the opportunity to access tap water at the festival, which is one of the most established sustainability initiatives at music festivals. The majority of the respondents considers it very important to have tap water available at the festival (Figure 4.2.), rating it 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 is very important.

Figure 4.2. Importance of available drinking water at the Veszprém Street Music Festival

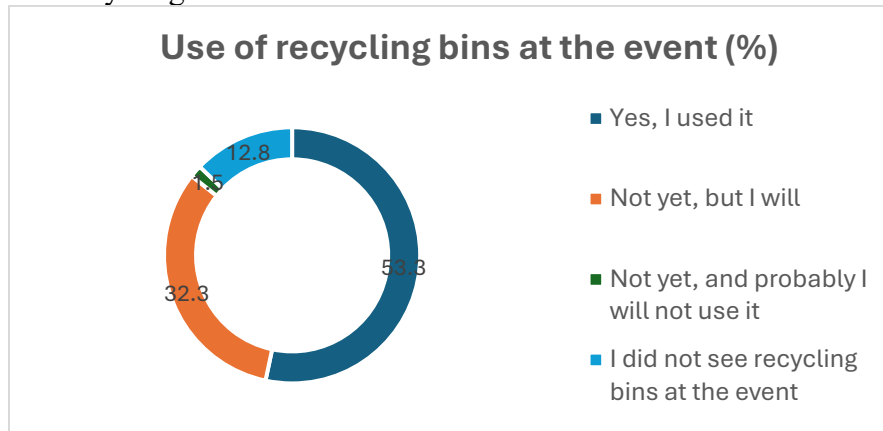


Source: Raffay-Danyi-Formádi (2022)

However, only a third of the participants declared that they refill their flasks at the festival site, while 41% buy bottled water. This finding indicates a significant gap between the attitude and the action of festival visitors, as even though they consider it important to have access to drinking water at the festival site, the majority still opts for bottled water. Those buying bottled water would purchase 1.8 bottles on average (80% suggested buying one or two bottles).

The question of buying bottled water relates to the amount of waste produced as well as recycling. Respondents were asked whether they had come across recycling containers at the festival site and if so, had they used them. More than 67% of the respondents had noticed the recycling bins, and 53% of the participants had already used them, and 32% of them claimed they would use them once necessary, but it was not the case thus far (Figure 4.3.). In general, 80% of the festival goers argue it is very important to ensure recycling at a festival site, the average response rate was 3.8 on a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 is very important.

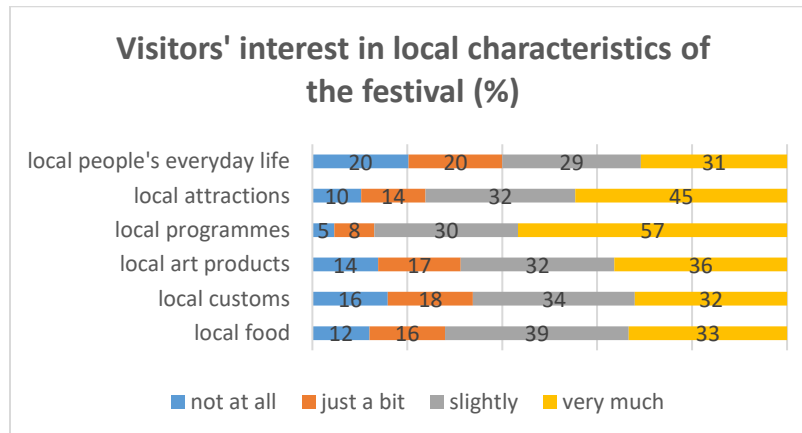
Figure 4.3. Use of recycling bins at the festival



Source: Raffay-Danyi-Formádi (2022)

The survey also aimed to assess some of the social impacts of festivals, in particular the role of the role in the festival. As the survey was conducted at a music festival, not too surprisingly respondents were mostly interested in local programmes, 57% of them indicated they were very interested, local attractions were the second most popular item on their list (45% marked these as very important for them), while participants are least interested in the lifestyle of the local people (20% of them were not interested at all). This indicates that festival visitors at the Veszprém Street Music Festival are less committed to the socio-cultural pillar of sustainability (Figure 4.4.).

Figure 4.4. Level of interest in the local characteristics of the festival



Source: Raffay-Danyi-Formádi (2022)

4.6. Conclusions

The findings of the survey showed that although visitors rate the importance of sustainability as very high, their contribution to responsible consumption is far from what could be considered sustainable. The largest gap between awareness and action relates to water consumption: although the majority of the respondents consider it very important to have tap water available at the festival, only a third of the participants refill their flasks at the festival site, while 41% buy bottled water. As for food consumption habits, there is no significant demand for meat free food options, only a minority of respondents follows a vegan or vegetarian diet, and reduced meat consumption is not typical at all. Based on these findings the festival food trends discussed in the literature review are not prevalent at the Veszprém Street Music Festival. Furthermore, visitors of the Veszprém Street Music Festival are less interested in the local character of the festival, the respondents indicated only low level of interest in local arts, and the local people's habits and lifestyle. The picture is more positive in the case of waste reduction and recycling: 80% of the festival goers argue it is very important; 67% of the respondents had noticed the recycling containers and 53% of the participants had used them, and 32% of them would use them later during the event. Research results imply that the concept of sustainability is important to festival visitors, however, only a few initiatives are successful and are reflected in the attitude and actions of visitors. It points to the need for better communication, to ensure that the initiatives are visible to festival goers and their awareness is raised.

4.7. Proposed theses

Based on the above, I propose the following thesis:

3.a) There is a gap between sustainability awareness and sustainable consumption at the Street Music Festival: respondents rate sustainability initiatives important but their actions do not fully correspond to their perceived importance.

3.b.) Higher education needs to put more emphasis on encouraging students to employ sustainability practices to achieve positive change.

5. Research on key competencies that enable tourism graduates to create positive change: Assessing university students' attitude to volunteering in cultural events

5.1. Introduction

Volunteering can contribute to the development of various competencies, 'knowledge', 'abilities and skills' and 'attitudes and values' types of competencies alike. University students undertake volunteer activities for different reasons, including gaining experience that might help their career; learning more about the world; and exercising skills that are often unused potentially due to the

lack of opportunity to use them. These motivations are aligned with the aim of higher education to develop competencies and skills that enhance student employability.

Veszprém was awarded the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title for 2023 in December 2018. The mission of the ECoC project focused on 5 aspects: community building, volunteering, tradition, innovation and sustainability. With these focal values the ECoC2023 Veszprém programme aimed to become a catalyst for social change in the city and the region.

Both the ECoC project host, the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 Joint Stock Company and the University of Pannonia have established a volunteer framework to ensure the potential involvement of younger people, especially students. The Veszprém-Balaton 2023 project team launched the volunteer programme ‘Shine’, while the University of Pannonia has also set up their volunteer programme, “CoolLaunch”.

One of the studies by Kővári and Raffay-Danyi (also involved expert members in the ECoC Presentation Team and Jury Visit Team) carried out in 2018, before winning the title, aimed to gain an insight into the university students’ cultural consumption patterns as well as their attitude to volunteering. A more complex, follow-up research was conducted by Kővári and Raffay-Danyi in 2022, aiming to assess the willingness to volunteer and potential factors influencing the willingness to volunteer in the ECoC programmes among three distinct university communities: 1) students, 2) lecturers/researchers, 3) other staff; however, the current thesis will present the results drawn from the student respondents only. Furthermore, the results regarding factors influencing willingness will only focus on emotional intelligence, especially as emotional intelligence impacts on empathy and social responsiveness, two competencies that were identified amongst the key competency requirements of the labour market in the tourism industry.

5.2. Literature review

5.2.1. Volunteering and motivations to volunteer

Volunteering has been popular since the 19th century in various countries of Europe, (Fényes – Kiss, 2011; Bartal, 2011), while in Hungary, volunteering started to gain popularity in 2001, since the International Year of Volunteers was declared by the United Nations (Bartal - Kmetty, 2011).

The motivation of volunteers can vary to great degree. Adongo et al. (2019, p 42) suggest that although volunteers are thought to be altruistic people, “their motivations can vary on a scale between altruism and self-interest”. Their motivation can range from helping others and thereby feeling a useful member of society to being amongst people, getting to know new people, gaining professional or other experience to getting close to celebrities or one’s sports idols (at events). Clary et al (1998) linked the motivations of volunteers’ personal development, and identified six fundamental categories, presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Motivational functions of volunteering

<i>Values function</i>	The person is volunteering in order to express or act on important values, such as humanitarianism and helping the less fortunate.
<i>Understanding function</i>	The volunteer is seeking to learn more about the world and/or exercise skills that are often unused
<i>Enhancement function</i>	The individual is seeking to grow and develop psychologically through involvement in volunteering
<i>Protective function</i>	The individual uses volunteering to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems
<i>Career function</i>	The volunteer has the goal to gain career-related experience through volunteering
<i>Social function</i>	Volunteering allows the person to strengthen one's social relationships

Source: Kővári and Raffay-Danyi (2022) based on Clary et al (1998).

Research on volunteering in ECoC cities has become popular since the Liverpool 2008 “Liverpool Welcome” programme, and following their example, every subsequent European Capital of Culture has introduced a formal volunteering system. To name some of the most successful examples, Aarhus introduced the ReThinkers volunteers in the ECoC year 2017, who continued to work with the Visit Aarhus tourism board after 2017, and volunteers in Matera and Plovdiv (both ECoC cities in 2019) also remained active after the ECoC year and assisted in cultural, sport and public events.

5.2.2. Willingness to volunteer in the VEB2023 ECoC programmes

Kővári and Raffay-Danyi conducted a study in 2018 out as part of the Veszprém-Balaton European Capital of Culture 2023 project bid to investigate the role of the university communities in the project, with special attention to willingness to volunteer.

The research consisted of two parts:

- 1) A questionnaire survey was conducted among the Hungarian and international students to identify the kinds of programmes they are interested in, the sources of information they use to find out about programmes, as well as the factors that influence their attitude and potential willingness to volunteering during the implementation of the ECoC project.
- 2) Two focus group interviews were conducted in July 2018 involving 11 participants, including Hungarian and international students, lecturers/researchers, including key decision makers (people in management positions including deans and the rector of the university), with the aim to investigate their willingness to volunteer during the ECoC project and their attitude towards the Campus Ambassador role related to the project.

The current thesis discusses only the results of the questionnaire survey conducted amongst students. The results revealed that 78% of the Hungarian respondents had heard about the ECoC initiative but only 52% were aware that Veszprém was bidding for the title for the year 2023.

One of the key aims of the 2018 study was to assess to what extent the city could rely on the university students as volunteers in case Veszprém won the title. The survey delivered promising

results as 56% of the Hungarian and 75% of the international students would be happy to become a Veszprém 2023 volunteer.

As for their motivation, both Hungarian and international students indicated that feeling a useful member of the community would be their primary motivation for volunteering, which is closest to the *enhancement function* where ‘the individual is seeking to grow and develop psychologically through involvement in volunteering’ based on the categories suggested by Clary et al (1998). This coincides with the mission of the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pannonia, striving to make societal impact, also by providing high quality business education that enables graduates to create positive change.

5.2.3. Emotional intelligence and volunteering

The 2022 study by Kővári and Raffay-Danyi also investigated factors that may influence the willingness to volunteer, including emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. The habilitation thesis focuses on the relationship between emotional intelligence and volunteering. The concept of emotional intelligence in relation to volunteering emerged only in the decade, therefore the number of experimental studies is limited, especially in the field of event and tourism management.

The concept of emotional intelligence itself came to the forefront towards the end of the 1990s, advocated by Daniel Goleman (1996). In the last 20 years, research (Hill, 2010) demonstrated the importance, impact, and correlations of emotional intelligence e.g. with performance, study, culture that have made economic, social, and scientific actors interested in the concept. The local communities in the cultural life of the city and aims to facilitate social change as well.

Emotional intelligence can be measured with various tests (e.g. EQ-I test, MEIS, MSCEIT tests, TEIQue), based on ability and personality traits (Petrides - Furnham, 2001; Mayer et al., 2011; Pérez-González - Ruiz, 2014). The above listed tests are all reliable, instrumentally and theoretically valid, however, for the purposes of the research, the TEIQue test was used as the test fits the aims of the research and is available in Hungarian as well. The TEIQue examines emotional intelligence through four dimensions: Well-being, Self-Control, Sociability, and Emotionality.

Assessing emotional intelligence is relevant from the point of view of volunteer satisfaction as well. The literature on volunteer satisfaction reveals a cognitive appraisal explanation of how volunteers experience and positively or negatively perceive the volunteer activity. Individual factors such as personality, motivation, emotional and cultural intelligence influence volunteers’ behaviour, performance and perception (Qi et al, 2018). According to Fee and Gray (2011) volunteering helps in developing skills to manage emotions. Furthermore, training provided to volunteers develop and/or enhance skills and competences which can complement the competency development activities of higher education institutions.

5.3. Research methods

The research aimed to assess the university communities’ cultural and emotional attitudes, with special focus on the impact of cultural and emotional intelligence on cultural consumption as well

as the influence of the emotional intelligence level on the willingness to volunteer in the ECoC programmes, on the student community. The following hypothesis was formulated in relation to emotional intelligence:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the level of emotional intelligence of the members of the university communities and the willingness to volunteer.

A questionnaire was devised comprising several validated questionnaire blocks, including sections examining cultural consumption clusters, sections measuring cultural intelligence (CQS) and emotional intelligence (TEIQue), and general demographic questions.

For assessing the general emotional intelligence level, as well as four key components of emotional intelligence, which are 1) Emotionality; 2) Sociability; 3) Well-being and 4) Self-control, the 30 statements of the validated TEIQue test were used.

5.4. Research findings

5.4.1. Impact of emotional intelligence on volunteering

The testing of the relationship between emotional intelligence and volunteering has brought surprising results. Only 27.9% of the students involved in the 2020 study indicated they would participate in the ECoC programmes as volunteers (compared to 56% in the study conducted in 2018). It must be noted that only Hungarian students were involved in the first round of the survey of the 2020 research, and we found during the research that international students have a higher level of willingness to volunteer (75% compared to 56% of the Hungarian students), as well as more free time to undertake volunteering activities.

Hypothesis 1 expected a positive relationship between the level of emotional intelligence of students and their willingness to volunteer. The SPSS ANOVA analyses indicated that participants' responses do not show significant correlation with the level of emotional intelligence on a general factorial level. As Table 5.2. demonstrates, the emotionality and sociability factor means are higher in the case of those respondents who would volunteer, thus with the EQ self-control and well-being factors this is reversed. One of the reasons could be that sociable, expressive and empathetic people are more willing to volunteer.

Table 5.2. Relationship between willingness to volunteer in cultural events and emotional intelligence factors, comparing volunteers and non-volunteers

<i>Form of participation in cultural events</i>		EQ_Emotionality	EQ_Self-control	EQ_Well-being	EQ_Sociability
<i>Spectator</i>	Mean	40.00	32.00	42.00	19.00
<i>Volunteer</i>	Mean	43.035	26.12	33.55	27.93

Source: Kővári and Raffay-Danyi (2022)

Regarding the original hypothesis we can conclude that the results do not indicate a significant relationship between EQ and willingness to volunteer as summarized in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Relationship between EQ and volunteering at cultural events

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>EQ_Emotionality</i>	Between Groups	9.105	1	9.105	.237	.628
	Within Groups	3264.895	85	38.411		
	Total	3274.000	86			
<i>EQ_Self_control</i>	Between Groups	34.220	1	34.220	1.171	.282
	Within Groups	2484.837	85	29.233		
	Total	2519.057	86			
<i>EQ_Well_being</i>	Between Groups	70.640	1	70.640	2.077	.153
	Within Groups	2891.314	85	34.015		
	Total	2961.954	86			
<i>EQ_Sociability</i>	Between Groups	78.832	1	78.832	2.490	.118
	Within Groups	2691.581	85	31.666		
	Total	2770.414	86			
<i>EQ_Total</i>	Between Groups	84.898	1	84.898	.214	.645
	Within Groups	33724.849	85	396.763		
	Total	33809.747	86			

Source: Kóvári and Raffay-Danyi (2022)

The rejection of H1 was surprising, as students with higher levels of emotional intelligence were expected to show more willingness to volunteer due to the reasons outlined in the literature. However, this finding contributed to the introduction of the optional ECoC module at the university with the aim of encouraging students to volunteer in the VEB2023 events.

5.5. Conclusions

The two surveys conducted amongst students showed different results regarding the willingness to volunteer in the ECoC programmes, though it has to be acknowledged that the two samples are not fully comparable. The first research conducted in 2018, including both Hungarian and international students, indicated that international students show more willingness to volunteer as they have more time during term time than their Hungarian counterparts who claim to have less free time due to work or family duties. As for their motivation, both Hungarian and international students indicated that feeling a useful member of the community would be their primary motivation for volunteering. Those who indicated willingness to volunteer would like to be involved primarily in music events, followed by sporting events, then children's programmes and artistic events. The

results of the 2020 research involving only Hungarian students indicated a much lower level of willingness to volunteer, which may be explained by the lack of a long tradition of volunteering in Hungary. However, when comparing the responses of Hungarian students participating in the 2018 study with the 2020 survey results, a drop in the willingness level can be observed, which raised concerns about the being able to engage Hungarian students in the ECoC activities as volunteers.

The assessment of the hypothesis, looking at the relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness to volunteer, surprisingly did not reveal any significant relationship between the two factors. The rejection of testing H1 may reflect the limitations of the research. The questionnaire used in the 2020 research was only available in Hungarian, therefore excluding the international students who showed a higher level of willingness to volunteer in the 2018 survey. Also, the number of respondents who indicated willingness to volunteer was much lower compared to those who show no interest in volunteering, which might have influenced the results as the sample was too small to detect significant relationships. Furthermore, the survey was conducted before the volunteering frameworks ‘Shine’ and ‘CoolLaunch’ were set up, therefore the respondents had less (recent) opportunities to volunteer in programmes in the city, so it will be interesting to see if the willingness to volunteer grows now that the opportunities for volunteering are given. Last but not least, another limitation of the research relates to the sample comprising only the students of one university, in one ECoC city.

5.6. Proposed theses

Based on these, I propose the following thesis statements:

4.a) Volunteering contributes to the development of key competencies, especially empathy and social responsiveness, that enhance the employability of university graduates.

4.b) Emotional intelligence does not have a significant relationship on the willingness to volunteer in the case of university students; it is rather influenced by other factors (like lack) of time and tradition of volunteering.

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