INTERNATIONAL PASSANGER SURVEY AT THE AIRPORT DEBRECEN – MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF DEPARTURE VISITORS FROM AD

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Abstract: The main reason of the research is to make a survey of the habits of foreign visitors arriving in Debrecen by air and their satisfaction. What was experienced in 2013 regarding low foreign proportion is also noticable in 2014. In the examined two months, of the whole passenger traffic between London and Debrecen only 10-15% is tourism by foreign visitors. There was not any information before about consumption of tourists arriving in Debrecen by air. In the course of my research I was examining the main elements of consumptions. From the gathered infromation from the questionaires it can be ascertained that on many occasions service providers failed to accomplish satisfying levels, quality. Underachievement occured and the experience of the visitors was worse than their expectations. This gives reasons for the indicators detailed analysis. The results of the satisfaction test might be an essential basis to further develop the city's tourist products and services in the future. Personal experience of either visitors satisfaction or dissatisfaction, gets stored as a memory which influences future decisions on travelling. Because of this the city has to make an effort to provide higher standards of quality to people travelling into Debrecen by air from the first moment of arrival till the last moment of departure and leave satisffied.

Keywords: visitor, airport, satisfaction**,** expection, questionnaire

Introduction

Nowdays in the business world quality has been raised. It is also true in the field of tourism, where the visitors expect value, therefore the quality of service influences satisfaction.

There are scheduled flights between Debrecen and London since June, 2012. Due to this the passenger traffic and number of foreign visitors to Debrecen increased. The personal experience of visitors, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction are stored as memories, which will effect their future decision making, regarding travel. The number of traffic passengers at Debrecen Airport has shown an increasing tendency in the last two years, thanks to the scheduled flights of Wizz Air. The first table presents the passengers traffic data of 2012 and 2013. On the basis of the passengers traffic data it is quite obvious that the number

of passengers has increased by leaps and bounds after one month. The chart contains the number of low cost airlines, summer chartered flights and other small aeroplanes as well. By the end of 2013 the anual passenger number almost reached 130 000 people. According to *Veres* and *Co.* (2011) an airport's appearance greatly emphasises the kind of picture visitors form about the quality of the visited area, as both the first and last impression of the city is connected to the airport.

Furthermore kind service, prompt organisation, attention and the airport's quality contribute whether the traveller will return to the destination or recommend it to others.

The main reason of my research is to make a survey of the services that are taken by foreign visitors arriving and departuring in Debrecen, and their satisfaction regarding these services. The continuation of research from the information

Table 1. The traffic passengers of Debrecen Airport in 2012-2013 (person/month)

	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.	Total
2012	33	36	52	355	857	4 660	9 960	10 470	7 347	4019	3862	6095	47 746
2013	7768	7050	8381	11 471	12 008	12 401	17 429	16 624	11 962	9075	7639	7340	129 231

Source: Author, on the basis of Debrecen Airport data

gathered from the questionnaires is a continuous development, which outlines the services used by foreign visitors, lightens up the problematic fields and guides to solve or reorganise these problematic areas in order to increase visitors satisfaction. Researches prove that strong relationships exist between the quality of services and purpose of the customer. The quality of services make a direct or / and indirect impact on customer willingness via customer satisfaction. (*Zeithaml et al.* 1996; *Cronin et al.* 2000)

In this present study I am introducing the result of the questionnaires collected during a two month period, following the test period of January 2014, regarding the character of visitors. This contains the main character of foreign visitors departuring from the city by plane, such as the division of travelling motivation, individual or organised tourism, have they been to Debrecen previously, if yes how many times, number of nights spent in the city, type of accomodation during their stay etc. Among the surveys, the prime result of visitor satisfaction will also be stated concerning services taken up during their stay in the city that accounts for further, deeper and more detailed study of the forthcoming period. 84 people were questioned. Concerning that the main aim of the research was to examine how they pass their time in the city, the data survey among foreing visitors was done in the English language. I only demonstrate the results of the first quarter of 2014 in this study. The whole research lasts until September.

Material and method

The purpose of the resarch is to gather infromation about the characters of foreign visitors arriving to the city by aeroplane, departuring from the Airport Debrecen and about their satisfaction regarding the services chosen during their stay. The questions of the applied questionnaires contain open ended, multiple-choice and evaluative questions. The satisfaction and opinions of the the questioned ones are evaluated on 5 point value scale. The value scale gives possibilities for comparative examinations (*Babbie* 2003). The application of five level intensity scale serves the purpose most likely, because there is no appreciation possibility from multiple level evaluation either. Evalution by points is an ordinal method, which gives precedence and this according to *Tomcsányi* (2000) is the mostly used classification system. Researchers generally use scale-technics to judge the quality of tourist related services, therefore it provides possibilities in the future to rank services and compare competitors (*Pénzes* 2001). The place of primer questionaire survey was the waiting room of Debrecen Airport, with the authorisation of the airport's managment, in compliance with safety regulations. The fundamental condition of questioning was the border crossing permission, issued by the frontier guards. In this present study, I give an outline of the main characteristics of the visitors filled out in the questionnaire during the two months – February and March – following the testing month, without the need of fullness, which will connect to the detailed satisfaction research.

Range of analysed persons

The range of analised persons are foreign nationalites, who spend some days in the city, arrived by plane to the city and departured from AD. From this point of view Hungarian, Romanian, Ukranian and Slovakian citizens are excluded from the traffic passenger datas, as they just pass through the city, and reach their destination through the airport. Despite this, it was not possible to exclude transit passengers completely, as it sometimes occured that the final destination of the British citizen's visitor was not Debrecen.

The questioning I did personally, the ticket controller staff helped me indentify the relevant foreign visitors. Identification happend via the name on the ticket, passport and English communication. Unfortunately, it was not possible to ask every foreign visitor to fill out the questionnaire. One of the barriers is the available time limit, that the survey is fixed to be done in a certain time of the day. Passangers, who arrive at the airport's waiting room before the departure of the aeroplane after the safety checking, could not answer my questions. Furthermore, there is no possibility to carry out the survey on all flights in one month.There is no chance of asking the whole range of target passengers with questionnaires, as there is neither sufficient time or money nor enough processing capabilities available. According to the theory of taking statistic samples, if the right samples are chosen, there is no need to ask the whole, it is enough to ask a fragment of the whole to obtain accurate datas concerning the whole. Correct sampling means that all members of the whole has the same chance to fall into the sample, that is the questioned persons have to be chosen randomly. Samples chosen in this manner are called representative samples (*Andorka* 2006).

The problem that occured during settling the sample, is that there are no data about the combination of passengers citizenships between Debrecen – Eindhoven flights. This deficiency is not the only problem in my research. According to *Kovács* (2012) since the termination of border crossings within the EU, due to the fact that the determination of tourist traffic volume is based on estamination, these datas reliability are limited and are not suitable for measuring tourist traffic, especially for leaving domestic tourism out of consideration. In terms of this survey domestic tourism is irrelevant. Due to the above mentioned problem, I limited the research to the London–Debrecen route, where thanks to passport control, the composition of citizens is definable by the quarterly Central Statistic Bureau data. Apart from the combination of passenger traffic nationalities, there was no other information available. No data about the demographical combination, therefore could not use quota sampling. In 2005 a similar kind of survey was carried out at Budapest 2B airport, departure lounge. The primer research involved tourists travelling by budget air lines. The number of questioned passengers were 414, the datasurvey took place in April, 2005. (*Mundruczné* 2005). The published study, did not make it clear that from how many passengers were the 414 people chosen, or how many flights were involved? *Gilyán* (2008) among other things finds airpassenger traffic advantageous because there

Table 2. Composition of departing and arriving passengers according to citizens nationality in 2013, Debrecen – Luton

	Departing (person)					Arriving (person)				
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	∑	I.	II.	III.	IV.	∑
Departing	**5495**	**9762**	**15048**	**7407**	**37712**	**5085**	**8872**	**15070**	**7349**	**36376**
Hungarian	4177	7366	11562	5921	29026	4147	6506	11327	5726	27706
Romanian	1212	2124	3211	1416	7963	762	2090	3439	1542	7833
Slovakian	87	234	246	40	607	132	262	272	57	723
Ukranian	19	38	29	30	116	44	14	32	24	114
Arriving	**696**	**1385**	**1815**	**1035**	**4931**	**747**	**1486**	**1899**	**1033**	**5165**
British	519	1050	1412	796	3777	574	1121	1435	793	3923
Other*	177	335	403	239	1154	173	365	464	240	1242
Total	6191	11147	16863	8442	42643	5832	10358	16969	8382	41541

Source: Author, based on Central Statistic Bureau data
*Other nationalities: French, Greek, Irish, Icelandic, Swedish, Izraeli, Nepalese, Ghanaian and others

Table 3. Composition of departing and arriving passengers according to citizens nationality in 2014, Debrecen – Luton

	February (person)				March (person)			
	Departing		Arriving		Departing		Arriving	
Departs	**2200**	**88,78%**	**1977**	**84,13%**	**2434**	**89,65%**	**2202**	**87,66%**
Hungarian	1750	70,62%	1631	69,40%	1918	70,64%	1754	69,82%
Romanian	429	17,31%	334	14,21%	507	18,67%	411	16,36%
Slovakian	17	0,69%	10	0,43%	7	0,26%	30	1,19%
Ukranian	4	0,16%	2	0,09%	2	0,07%	7	0,28%
Arrivals	**278**	**11,22%**	**373**	**15,87%**	**281**	**10,35%**	**310**	**12,34%**
British	207	8,35%	289	12,30%	209	7,70%	230	9,16%
Others*	71	2,87	84	3,57%	72	2,65%	80	3,18%
Total	**2478**	**100%**	**2350**	**100%**	**2715**	**100%**	**2512**	**100%**

Source: Author, based on Central Statistic Bureau datas
*Other nationalities: French, Greek, Irish, Icelandic, Swedish, Izraeli, Nepalese, Ghanaian and others

are no commuter or transit traffic along the border. In my case, the opposite appeared, as in 2013, the commuter and frontier traffic describes the whole passenger number (85-90%).

Foreign visitors to the city, whose purpose is tourism, in the last few years is only 10-15% of the entire passenger traffic between Debrecen-London. Concerning passenger traffic in the surveyed two months in 2014, the *3rd table* contains the composition of citizens by nationaities.

The observed low foreign proportion in 2013 is also noticable in 2014. In the inspected two months, foreign visitors to the city whose purpose is tourism, is only 10-15% of the whole passanger traffic between Debrecen–London.

Introduction of the applied questionaires

The questionnaires prepared and applied since January can be diveded into two parts. The first part contains questions about the travelling characteristics of travellers. There are eleven questions in total in this part, open and close questions. It is important to highlight travelling motivation, that determines the range of services used, as they differ between a

sightseeing tourist and those who come to the city on business and to attend conferences.

In the second part of the questionnaire the satisfaction of visitor measuring takes place concerning service progression taken. According to *Morvay* and *Daruka* (2009), regarding tourist services, the consciousness of risk is high for both the consumer and supplier as the services during utilization progress are not fixable, unrepeatable. Therefore the desired result, i.e hitting visitor's satisfaction is a much harder task with services than in the case of physical materials. On the basis of *Kenesi* and *Kolos'* (2007) defenition, the basic difference between services and physical products, that services cannot be held in hands, that is we are not talking about objects, but performance, progression and action. I divided satisfaction into eight dimensions that each represent one service: airport services, transport, accommodation, eating, entertainment, medical services, conference attendance, sport. Each of the eight dimensions can be written down with indicators. According to *Hofmeister* et. al (2003) dimension is such a variable, which can be written down with many, actual, measurable indicators. The sum of these indicators gives the stating set, which are rated by the selected value

scale among the questioned ones. For example, the dimension developed for qualifying accommodation services contains such indicators as room facilities, language knowledge and so on. Philip Kotler composed satisfaction as:'satisfaction is a persons happiness or dissapointment that derives from facing comparison during waiting time and what accomplishment perceived when choosing a product. A consumer is satisfied when the product serves his or her expectations, a consumer is very satisfied when the product exceeds his or her expectations and a consumer is dissatisfied when the product does not match its previous expectations. 'Its perceptible from the definition that apart from satisficton, expectation is important which leads to satisfaction. Therefore I used two types of surveying tools. The first one serves the satisfaction of visitors with the indicator of taken services. *Hofmeister et al.* (2003) defines satisfaction as a function of expectation, which alters either positive or negative by detecting quality, having expectations proved. The second applied measuring scale is for measuring service expectation.

The survey of visitors satisfaction makes it possible, that there are more evaluative questions among the others, since satisfaction of different services are well evaluated by using scale technics. As I do not have previous information and there were not any surveys taken at the airport by questionnaires beforhand, it is not sure that the dimensions used by me contain all services that visitors take, neither lacking services. Therefore, after all dimensions indicators, by using open questions there is possibility for the questioned ones to express their opinion, demand.

Main conclusions of testing the questionnaire

I carried out the testing of questionaires in January 2014. There were a total of sixteen flights between London and Luton in January, passengers of seven flights were surveyed. The questioning I did personally. All together twenty-three people were involved in testing. Out of twenty-three, five were invaluable and eighteen valuable. *4th table* demonstrates the departing passangers traffic's composition by nationalities in January 2014.

As can be seen from 4th table, the proportion of relevant foreign visitors – British and other nationalities – are low. Of the whole passenger traffic, only 8.76%, 244 people forms the whole population. This number differs, its about 4-14 persons per flight. Questioning tied me to a time limit, I had about 45 minutes per flight to carry out data collecting. The ticket validating staff helped me recognise the foreigners, name on the ticket, passport and communication in English helped me identify them. Unfortunately, it is not possible to recognize all foreign visitors during the data collection, furthermore due to limited time, it was not possible to fill out all questionnaires. 23 questionnaires were filled out in January, 4 visitors refused to fill it out and there was no opportunity to ask the other 12 travellers.

The filled out and valuable eighteen questionnaires were filled out by 8 women and 10 men. Regarding nationalities

there were 13 people from the United Kingdom, 1 Irish, 2 Italian and 2 Japanese nationalities. There are various answers to the questions: 'What nationality…?' from Great Britain, such as: British, English, African English, Great Britain or UK. During processing I handled these the same, as one nationality. Emerging question is the Hungarian and British nationality. It occured that the chosen visitor had British passport but Hungarian nationality. There were two such cases in January and due to their Hungarian nationality they were not willing to cooperate in completing the questionnaire. Considering the motivation, 7 people stated private trip, 5 people medical trip (dental care), 1 person business trip and 5 people arrived to study into Debrecen.

Table 4. Composition of departing traffic passengers by nationalities (January 2014)

	January (pers)	%
Departures	**2541**	**91,24%**
Hungarian	1609	57,77%
Romanina	915	32,85%
Ukranian	10	0,36%
Slovakian	7	0,25%
Arrivals	**244**	**8,76%**
British	198	7,11%
Others*	46	1,65%
Total	**2785**	**100%**

Source: Author, based on Central Statistic Bureau data
* Other nationalities: French, Greek, Irish, Icelandic, Swedish, Izraeli, Nepalese, Ghanaian and others

It becomes clear from the questionnaires, that on many occasions the services are not up to their standards and are 'worse' than expected. Therefore it is important that we analyze the services in more detail and find out what indicator caused visitors dissatisfaction. In most cases the used services did not cause lasting experience, but it was up to satisfaction. To eliminate unvaluable questionnaires I corrected the grammatical errors, as well as added further explanations to the forms filling instructions.

Main conclusions of the survey taken in February and March

The study introduces the main results of the data survey in February and March in the result section. During the two months 17 flights were involved in the survey. Precisely, in February 9 flights out of 16 flights and in March 8 out of 18 flights were involved in the datasurvey. Althogether 84 questionnaires were filled out, of which 7 were useless and

77 useful. A further 50 foreign visitors were unable to be questioned, as they only arrived to the waiting lounge a few minutes prior to departure. 7 people were not willing to fill out the forms. 3 out of 7 had British nationality but Hungarians, so referring to their nationality they did not want to take part in a survey concerning foreigners. In March 2 people were stopped who already filled out the forms in January or February. In February 1 person said that he filled out the form during the testing period in January. Therefore they did not fill out the questionnaire either. Altogether 147 foreign visitors were recognised during the two months and a further 15 childeren or baby visitors.

The distribution of nationalities are showed on Figure 1 of the foreign tourists who were asked during the survey. 73% of the answering tourists are British nationalities, 5% Izraeli, 4% Italian, 3% Swedish, 2% Icelandic, and a further 13% are other nationalities like Irish, Brazilian, Australian, Chinese, Ghanian, Dutch, Maltese, Nepalese, Polish, Portuguese and other. It is obvious that the largest proportion are British. 88.32% of visitors are from Europe, but other nationalities outside Europe appear too, such as Nepal, Australia or Brazil.
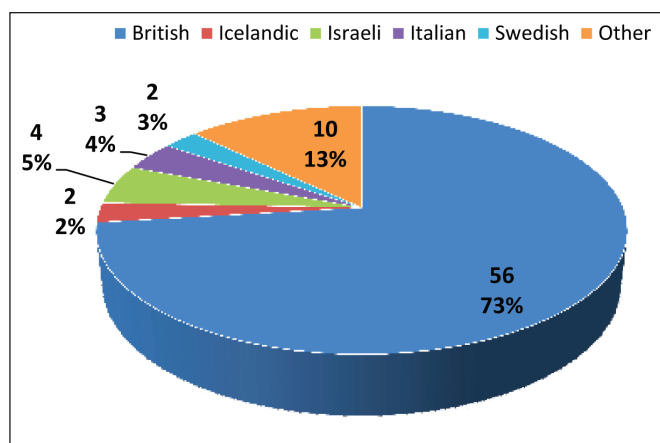

Figure 1. Distribution of nationalities (person, %)
Source: results of author's research

Concerning people aged between 18-30 represents the highest portion with 44,2% (34 people), followed by 16,9% people between 31-40, than equally 13% (10-10 people) aged 41-50 and 51-60, and finally people over 60. The portion of women in the sample is 39%, that is 30 people and 61% i.e. 47 people are male.

Figure 2 demonstrates the distribution of travelling purpose. On the basis of the completed questionnaires, the most common reason of travelling among foreign toursits between London-Luton and Debrecen is 'private journey', which was marked by 26 people. This group is formed by parents, friends who come to visit someone studying at the University of Debrecen. The next portion of travelling motivation was business journey with 20 people. The third portion 16,88% was the group of students in Debrecen. Realisticly high portion, 12,99% the group arriving to Debrecen for medical treatments. Of these,10 people came for dental treatment. Under 'other reasons' people mentioned; charity work,

travelling further to Romania. The lowest portion was 1,30% sightseeing, sport and leasure activities. Both activities were mentioned by only 1 person.
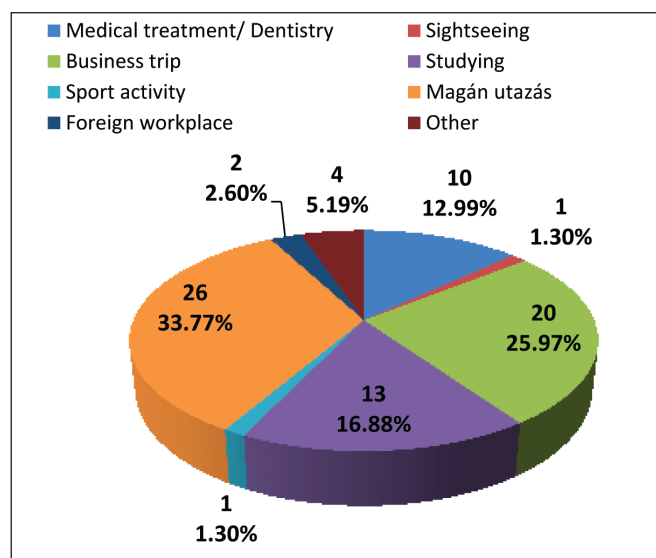

Figure 2. Distribution of travelling purpose (person, %)
Source: results of author's research

Having examined travelling habits, figure 3 shows how often the questioned ones travel abroad yearly. The majority of visitors, 42,9% travel abroad 1-2 occasions a year. This followed by the portion who travel abroad minimum once a month, this is 28 people i.e. 36,4%. One person marked that he travels abroad weekly and a further 15 people that they travel yearly 4-6 times. Following this the biggest portion is visitors who travel abroad at least once a month, this is 28 people i.e. 36,4%. One person marked to travel abroad weekly and a further 15 people 4-6 times a year. Nobody chose the option to travel rarer or more frequently than indicated or neither chose the 'other' category.
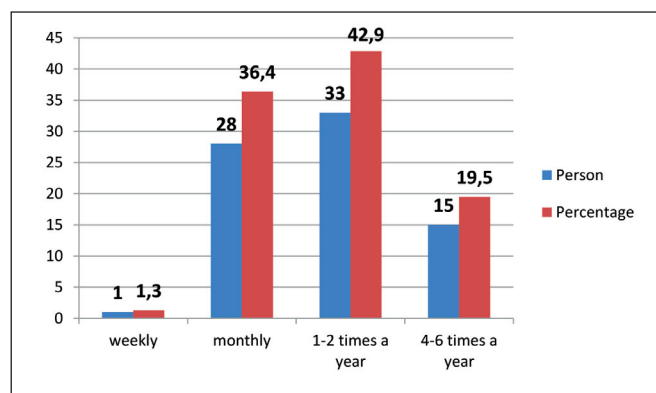

Figure 3. Distribution of travelling frequency (person, %)
Source: results of author's research

Regarding the question how many times had they been to Debrecen, out of the people, precisely 25, answered first time which is 32.5% of the sample. Following this the biggest portion 27.5%, 21 people said that they have payed a visit on 2-3 occasions. 24.7% of the questioned people considered

themselves regular visitors, the remaining 15.6% i.e 12 people have travelled more than 4 times to Debrecen. I think it is a very interesting result that those who have been in the city more than once, almost 60%, have been in the city more than 4 times. (31 people out of 52)

Concerning the question that made them choose Debrecen is demonstrated on Figure 4. The majority, 47% answered 'other' among the choices. Most of the time the decison was based on the prime location of the airport, which is close to Romania, Oradea. Further reasons for choosing Debrecen among 'other' categories is visiting an acquaintance who is taking part in Erasmus programme or because of the Medical University's or Dentistry's advertisment. The following large segment contains visitors who were invited to Debrecen by acquaintances, or an acquaintance recomended the city. Only 2 people used the services of travel agencies and had been influenced by their recommendation.
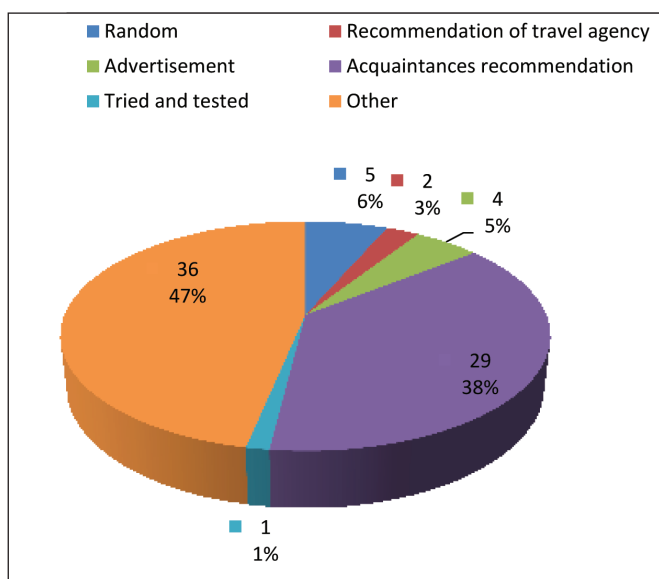

Figure 4. Distribution of decision determinants (person, %)
Source: results of author's research

97.4% of the questioned ones organised their trip individually and only 2 people (2.6%) travelled via organised tour. Analysing the type of travelling 36.4% of the people arrived alone in Debrecen and 27.7% with their family. Further 11 people, i.e 14.3% arrived with a friend. 18.2% arrived to Debrecen with a collegue, precisely 14 people. Finally 5 people came in a group to the city.

There has not been any information about the consumpsion of people who arrive to Debrecen by air. I planned to check the main components of this during the survey. Accordingly, how many nights they spent in town, what services they used during their stay. Table 5 contains the type of accommodation on the basis of days spent in town. The chart does not contain people who only travelled through the city as they did not take accommodation, this is 13 people from the test. Most of them used private accommodation and stayed with friends or family during their stay. 18 people spent more than 7 nights in Debrecen and 4 people only 1-2 nights. 23 people stayed in

Hotels for 1-2 nights, 6 people 3-7 nights and 3 people spent more than 7 nights in the town. 5 people marked the 'other' cathegory, 1 person out of this rented private room, 2 people stayed in boarding school, and the other two did not give a clear answer to this question.

Table 5. Distribution of accommodation types and number of days spent in town (pers.)

		Type of accommodation				Total
		Hotel	Panzio	Private accom.	Other	
Number of days spent in town	1-2 nights	14	2	4	1	21
	3-7 nights	6	1	10	3	20
	More than 7 days	3	0	18	1	22
Total		23	3	32	5	63

Source: results of author's research

Table number 6 contains the distribution of travelling purpose and number of days spent in town. As seen in the chart, foreign visitors whose purpose of travelling is either business or working abroad only use Debrecen to travel through. 11 people stated Romania as their final destination, they only chose Debrecen airport because of its favourable location and nearness to Oradea. Another 2 people who also stated 'other' travelling motivation, namely charity work, also just travelled through Debrecen, their final destination was also Romania. 26 people arrived privately to Debrecen with the purpose of visiting relatives, out of them 11 people spent 3-7 nights, 9 people spent more then 7 nights in town. Among people who chose medical treatment, 10 people came for dental treatment, out of them 4 people spent 1-2 nights, 5 people 3-7 nights and one person more than 7 nights. Among visitors with the purpose of studying 3 people spent 3-7 nights, and 10 people spent more than 7 nights in town. They probably spent a longer period, many months in Debrecen.

Services used by foreign visitors are shown in *table 7*. It can be seen from the chart that everyone used and valuated airport services as it is unavoidable not to use if they want to fly from it. Concerning transportation 13 people that is 19.9% used cars, private transport and did not use taxi, bus or tram. They travelled with friends' cars or company cars. Visitors who did not require accommodation (39 pers.), food (35 pers) stayed and ate at friends, relatives or family during their stay in Debrecen. When medical treatment came up, 10 people had planned dentistry care and another 8 people used unplanned medical services. 6 people attended conferences, they came to study. 7 people tried sport activity of which, one had pre-planned, while the other 6 had just ended up trying some sport spontaneously or attended a sport event.

Table 6. Distribution of travelling purpose and number of days spent (pers.)

Travelling motivation	Numbers of days				Total
	Transit	1-2 nights	3-7 nights	More than 7 nights	
Private journey	0	6	11	9	26
Sightseeing	0	1	0	0	1
Medical treatment					
Dentist	0	4	5	1	10
Business trip	9	9	0	2	20
Working abroad	2	0	0	0	2
Studying, education	0	0	3	10	13
Sport activity	0	1	0	0	1
Other	2	0	1	1	4
Total	13	21	20	23	77

Source: results of author's research

Table 7. Utilization of services in February and March 2014 (pers,%)

	Used it		Did not use it	
Airport services	77	100%	0	0
Transport serv.	64	83,1%	13	16,9%
Accommodation	38	49,4%	39	50,6%
Eating	42	54,5%	35	45,5%
Entertainment	9	11,7%	68	88,3%
Medical services	18	23,4%	59	76,6%
Conference	6	7,8%	71	92,2%
Sport	7	9,1%	70	90,9%

Source: results of author's research

Table 8 contains the results of service expectation correspondance. It can be seen, that many times the services were not up to the visitors standards, and the used service was worse than expected. On the basis of these facts it is reasonable to analyse services in details and find out what indicator caused the visitors dissatisfaction. In most cases the services did not cause memorable experiences but it was up to their expectations.

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Table 8. Correspondance of service expectation (pers. %)

	It was like expected	It was better than expected	It was worse than expected	Total
Airport serv.	59	7	11	77
Transport serv.	48	6	10	64
Accomm.	23	9	6	38
Eating	29	6	7	42
Entertainment	6	0	3	9
Medical serv.	9	6	3	18
Conference	5	1	0	6
Sport	5	0	2	7

Source: results of author's research

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