

## Research Article

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# The index of tourist satisfaction with Lithuania

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**Abstract:** During the past decades, tourism has become one of the fastest growing areas in the service sector in the world. If the aspiration is to develop a well-organised tourism industry, then fulfilment of tourist needs and wishes should be achieved. The most common technique for identifying the compatibility between tourist needs and the experience with tourism destination is tourist satisfaction measurement.

Lithuania is a small country in the northern part of Central/ Eastern Europe; the country is rarely considered as an independent tourist destination, but mostly as one of the Baltic States. Foreign tourist satisfaction is very important for the country. Considering the necessity to excel in the region, the aim of the research is to develop the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania.

The previously elaborated model of Lithuanian tourist satisfaction index is used as a background. The index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania is constructed by the following stages: 1. A questionnaire research with foreign tourists, based on a theoretical model of Lithuanian Tourist Satisfaction Index, is provided; 2. The impact of model's variables on tourist satisfaction with Lithuania is determined; 3. The main variables having an impact on foreign tourist satisfaction with Lithuania are determined; and a general model of the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania is composed.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction, Lithuania, Satisfaction index, Tourist satisfaction.

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## 1 Introduction

Lithuania is a small country in the northern part of Central / Eastern Europe; the country is rarely considered as an independent tourist destination, rather it is often thought of as one of the Baltic states. According to Markauskienė and Gižienė (2012), inbound tourism in Lithuania has developed over the past few decades; however, its contribution to the country's economy is significant, but insufficient. Selladurai and Sundararajan (2013) suggest that in order to develop the tourism industry, tourist satisfaction has been an important goal for many countries. Therefore, foreign tourist satisfaction is very important for Lithuania as well.

Tourism as a business includes tourism product development and tourism services, and provides a certain amount of revenue to a given country's exchequer (Markauskienė & Gižienė, 2012). Considering the triad, the revenue actually depends on two other components: tourism product and related services. It can be argued that the two components determine the level of tourist satisfaction with a country; moreover, the excellence in these components leads to tourist loyalty. Many scholars across the world (Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Song et al., 2011; Al-Majali, 2012; Siri et al., 2012; Song et al., 2012, etc.) have distinguished tourism product- and service-related factors, which affect tourist satisfaction. However, our previous researches (see Pilelienė & Grigaliūnaitė, 2014a; Grigaliūnaitė & Pilelienė, 2014) revealed the difference in combinations of factors that have an effect on tourist satisfaction. In particular, the kind of tourism. Markauskienė and Gižienė (2012) argue that three major kinds of tourism can be distinguished: local, inbound and outbound tourism. Therefore, the problem analysed in the article is: What are the factors affecting inbound tourist satisfaction with Lithuania? Consequently, the aim of the research is to develop the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania.

To realise the aim of the article, the previously elaborated theoretical model of Lithuanian Tourist Satisfaction Index (Pilelienė & Grigaliūnaitė, 2014b), is used as a background. Inbound tourists' attitudes and evaluations towards Lithuania are determined based on the research through a questionnaire. Structural equation modelling

(SEM), using partial least squares (PLS) path modelling methodology, is applied for statistical analysis.

## 2 Lithuania as a tourist destination

Tourism does not exist as a separate and independent entity within the national accounting; moreover, tourism flows significantly vary across different geographical areas and countries. Such variations depend on many factors and are sensitive to circumstantial phenomena (Tuță & Micu, 2014).

Considering Lithuania as a tourist destination, various natural, political, geographical and historical factors affecting the country's popularity among tourists can be found.

Geographically, Lithuania can be considered as a country in the middle of Europe. According to World Atlas (2014), the geographical centre of Europe is located in Lithuania at 54°54'N 25°19'E. Lithuania is bounded by the Baltic Sea on the east and has a sandy coastline. The country is small (a bit more than 65,000 square kilometres); landscape is plain, seamed with forests and numerous lakes. Considering climate, it ranges between maritime and continental, and is relatively mild: Lithuania is not characterised by hot summers, or very cold winters. The country's size and geographical position determine that the country is rarely considered as an independent tourist destination, but only as one of the Baltic states (alongside Latvia and Estonia).

Lithuania joined the international tourism market as an independent country less than quarter of century ago. Markauskienė and Gižienė (2012) emphasise that at this time Lithuania's economy has faced new changes through inbound tourism flows and tourist expenditures inside the country. Tuță and Micu (2014) argue that Central and Eastern Europe is an area where international tourism has experienced failures attributable to the former system of centralised economy. However, nowadays the former political situation serves for Lithuania as a tourism driver. Older people from the former Soviet Union come to visit country driven by nostalgia.

Moreover, cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO can be found in Lithuania: Vilnius Historic Centre, Curonian Spit and Kernavė Archaeological Site.

According to Statistics Lithuania (2014), in 2013 (in comparison to 2012), the number of trips with overnight stay of foreign tourists increased by 5.9 percent (from 1.9 million in 2012 to 2 million in 2013). According to the

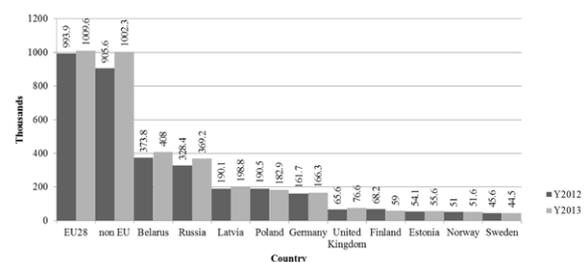
European Commission (2014), tourists mainly arrive from bordering countries: Poland, Russia, Latvia and Belarus. Further significant countries for tourism in Lithuania are Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy. In Figure 1 is presented an amount of foreign tourists by country.

The average traveller's expenditures increased only by 0.1 per cent: in 2013, foreign tourist's average expenditures was 1273 LTL (local currency at the period of the research; 1 EUR = 3.4528 LTL); total expenditure by foreign tourists in 2013 was 2.6 billion LTL (6 per cent more than in 2012). The total contribution of travel and tourism to the national economy exceeded 4 percent of GDP in 2011 and is forecast to rise by 4.6 percent each year until 2022 (European Commission, 2014).

## 3 Theoretical model of tourist satisfaction index

According to Markauskienė and Gižienė (2012), tourism is a very prospective economic activity involving a wide spectrum of historical, natural and cultural resources, and provides a field for employment. According to European Commission (2014), in 2011, the tourism sector in Lithuania directly involved 22,500 occupations accounting for more than 1.56 percent of total Lithuanian employment), encourages investments and forces economic development. However, to become effective, tourism-related activities have to correspond to tourist needs and requirements; in other words, tourist satisfaction has to be achieved.

Previous researches on tourist satisfaction indices (Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Song et al., 2011; Al-Majali, 2012; Siri et al., 2012; Song et al., 2012; etc.) enabled the determination of factors affecting tourist satisfaction, namely accommodation and catering facilities, activities in destination, natural features, destination aesthetics, environmental preservation and destination marketing; the main



**Figure 1:** Foreign tourists in Lithuania by country  
Source: Statistics Lithuania (2014).

consequence of satisfaction is considered to be tourist loyalty.

All the determinants of tourist satisfaction as well as its outcome (tourist loyalty) can be integrated into the tourist satisfaction index model. The structural equations representing the model are:

1. Satisfaction =  $\beta_{70}$  +  $\beta_{71}$  Accommodation and catering +  $\beta_{72}$  Activities in destination +  $\beta_{73}$  Natural features +  $\beta_{74}$  Destination aesthetics +  $\beta_{75}$  Environmental preservation +  $\beta_{76}$  Destination marketing +  $\zeta_7$
2. Loyalty =  $\beta_{80}$  +  $\beta_{81}$  Accommodation and catering +  $\beta_{82}$  Activities in destination +  $\beta_{83}$  Natural features +  $\beta_{84}$  Destination aesthetics +  $\beta_{85}$  Environmental preservation +  $\beta_{86}$  Destination marketing +  $\beta_{87}$  Satisfaction +  $\zeta_8$

As the model is theoretical, empirical research is necessary to substantiate its application in a framework of foreign tourist satisfaction with Lithuania.

## 4 Research methodology

Considering the aim and the problem of the research, the questionnaire method of research was resorted to (the questionnaire is available from the authors upon request). The preferred measurement model was a reflective one; two to four manifest variables reflected each latent variable. During the research, a 10-point evaluation scale was applied for the questionnaire and the total sample size was 330 respondents. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2014.

Structural equation modelling (SEM), using partial least squares (PLS) path modelling methodology, was applied for statistical analysis; to uncover and treat unobserved heterogeneity, finite mixture partial least squares (FIMIX-PLS) clustering approach was provided; in order to assess whether segment-specific path coefficients differ significantly, PLS path modelling multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA) was presented.

IBM SPSS Statistics V.20, SmartPLS V.3 (Ringle et al., 2014), XLSTAT 2013 and IBM SPSS Amos V.20 software products were used for the statistical analysis of the research results.

## 5 Analysis of the research results

The analysis of the research results revealed that the theoretical index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania contained statistically non-significant direct causal relations between latent variables. Particularly, ‘accommodation and catering’, ‘destination aesthetics’ and ‘destination marketing’ had no statistically significant direct effect on loyalty; the variables ‘environmental preservation and natural features’ had no statistically significant direct effect on satisfaction (see Table 1). Consequently, these direct relations were eliminated from the model and this led to the creation of the new PLS Path model.

All of the indicators that made up the measurement model of the new PLS path model were assessed as reliable due to the indicators’ loadings being above 0.7 and statistically significant. Moreover, measurement model was considered as displaying sufficient degree of convergent validity based on average variance extracted (AVE) values being above 0.5.

As composite reliability measure does not assume that all indicators are equally reliable and prioritise indicators according to their reliability during model estimation, latter measure was estimated for evaluating internal consistency reliability of the measurement model. All of the composite reliability values were higher than 0.7 (see Table 2); thus the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model was sufficient.

Discriminant validity of the measurement model was evaluated based on two criteria: cross loadings and Fornell-Larcker criterion. Regarding cross loadings, all indicators’ loadings with their corresponding latent constructs were higher than their loadings with all the remaining constructs. Regarding Fornell-Larcker criterion, each construct’s squared root AVE value was higher than its correlations with other latent variables (see Table 3). Thus, latent constructs share more variance with their assigned indicators than with another latent variable in the structural model. Consequently, the validity of the individual indicators and of the constructs was proved.

The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) value is equal to 0.04, thus model predictions match the data good enough. *R*-square values of variables ‘satisfaction’ and ‘loyalty’ are respectively 43 and 40 percent; hence, the proportion of variance explained by the fit regarding these variables is sufficient. Moreover, all cross-validated redundancy values (Stone-Geissers’  $Q^2$ )

**Table 1:** Path Coefficients and their significances at the theoretical model

Variables	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	Confidence Interval Low	Confidence Interval Up	T Statistics	p Values
<i>Accommodation and Catering -&gt;Loyalty</i>	0.064	0.053	-0.035	0.166	1.208	0.228
Accommodation and Catering -> Satisfaction	0.163	0.050	0.057	0.262	3.257	0.001
Activities in Destination -> Loyalty	0.137	0.050	0.049	0.242	2.743	0.006
Activities in Destination ->Satisfaction	0.149	0.052	0.042	0.245	2.854	0.004
<i>Destination Aesthetics -&gt; Loyalty</i>	0.045	0.047	-0.046	0.139	0.957	0.339
Destination Aesthetics -> Satisfaction	0.181	0.049	0.084	0.274	3.694	0.000
<i>Destination Marketing -&gt; Loyalty</i>	0.090	0.051	-0.009	0.188	1.780	0.076
Destination Marketing -> Satisfaction	0.292	0.049	0.191	0.380	5.979	0.000
Environmental Preservation -> Loyalty	0.133	0.059	0.021	0.249	2.267	0.024
<i>Environmental Preservation -&gt; Satisfaction</i>	0.080	0.059	-0.040	0.186	1.359	0.175
Natural Features ->Loyalty	0.236	0.050	0.142	0.339	4.705	0.000
<i>Natural Features -&gt;Satisfaction</i>	0.054	0.054	-0.054	0.164	0.994	0.321
Satisfaction ->Loyalty	0.175	0.052	0.076	0.272	3.327	0.001

**Table 2:** Composite Reliability and AVE values

Variables	Composite Reliability	AVE
Accommodation and Catering	0.784	0.645
Activities in Destination	0.800	0.571
Destination Aesthetics	0.771	0.628
Destination Marketing	0.786	0.647
Environmental Preservation	0.785	0.647
Loyalty	0.814	0.687
Natural Features	0.812	0.683
Satisfaction	0.765	0.619

for endogenous latent variables are above zero (see Table 4). Consequently, the model exhibits predictive relevance. Furthermore, predictors' variables' variance inflation factor (VIF) is lower than 5; therefore, there is no multicollinearity.

All of the exogenous variables' effect sizes on the endogenous variables range from small to average. The highest effect size is created by variable 'destination marketing' to variable 'satisfaction'. The smallest effect size is created by variable 'environmental preservation' to variable 'loyalty'. Despite this, later effect size is above 0.02 and the beta of this relation is significant, implying that this effect is meaningful.

Path coefficients and their statistical significances are provided in Table 5. The variables 'accommodation and catering', 'activities in destination', 'destination aesthetics' and 'destination marketing' have direct, positive and statistically significant influences on variable 'satisfaction'. The variables 'activities in destination', 'environmental preservation', 'natural features' and 'satisfaction' have direct, positive and statistically significant influences on the variable 'loyalty'.

Besides the direct effects between variables, all of the total effects in the model are statistically significant as well (see Table 6). Even though variables 'accommodation and catering', 'destination aesthetics' and 'destination marketing' have no direct statistically significant effects on 'loyalty', these variables have statistically significant total effects on variable 'loyalty'. Furthermore, the variable 'activities in destination' affects 'loyalty' directly as well as indirectly through variable 'satisfaction'. Thus the total effect of 'activities in destination' on 'loyalty' is higher than direct effect. As the path coefficient between variables 'activities in destination' and 'loyalty' is reduced when the indirect path via variable 'satisfaction' is introduced in the model, it could be stated that 'satisfaction' became a mediator variable.

To uncover and treat the unobserved heterogeneity, finite mixture partial least squares (FIMIX-PLS) clustering approach was applied. The results of FIMIX-PLS were

**Table 3:** Fornell–Larcker criterion

Variables	Accommodation and Catering	Activities in Destination	Destination Aesthetics	Destination Marketing	Environmental Preservation	Loyalty	Natural Features	Satisfaction
Accommodation and Catering	0.803	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Activities in Destination	0.490	0.756	-	-	-	-	-	-
Destination Aesthetics	0.317	0.355	0.792	-	-	-	-	-
Destination Marketing	0.349	0.392	0.381	0.805	-	-	-	-
Environmental Preservation	0.417	0.378	0.503	0.384	0.804	-	-	-
Loyalty	0.413	0.451	0.399	0.410	0.462	0.829	-	-
Natural Features	0.438	0.428	0.438	0.361	0.496	0.512	0.827	-
Satisfaction	0.454	0.461	0.461	0.526	0.434	0.490	0.413	0.787

**Table 4:** R Square, f Square, Q Square and VIF values

Variables	R Square	f Square Loyalty	f Square Satisfaction	VIF Loyalty	VIF Satisfaction	Q Square
Accommodation and Catering	-	-	0.048	-	1.391	-
Activities in Destination	-	0.034	0.033	1.412	1.463	-
Destination Aesthetics	-	-	0.069	-	1.263	-
Destination Marketing	-	-	0.126	-	1.315	-
Environmental Preservation	-	0.032	-	1.471	-	-
Loyalty	0.401	-	-	-	-	0.2569
Natural Features	-	0.076	-	1.497	-	-
Satisfaction	0.430	-	-	1.451	-	0.2641

**Table 5:** Path Coefficients and their statistical significances at the global model

Variables	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	Confidence Interval Low	Confidence Interval Up	T Statistics	p Values
Accommodation and Catering -> Satisfaction	0.195	0.050	0.106	0.304	3.855	0.000
Activities in Destination -> Loyalty	0.170	0.048	0.077	0.259	3.520	0.000
Activities in Destination -> Satisfaction	0.166	0.048	0.071	0.263	3.472	0.001
Destination Aesthetics -> Satisfaction	0.223	0.046	0.132	0.309	4.911	0.000
Destination Marketing -> Satisfaction	0.308	0.048	0.208	0.394	6.421	0.000
Environmental Preservation -> Loyalty	0.169	0.053	0.075	0.267	3.191	0.002
Natural Features -> Loyalty	0.261	0.050	0.162	0.351	5.259	0.000
Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0.231	0.052	0.127	0.325	4.453	0.000

**Table 6:** Total effects and their statistical significances

Variables	Total effects	Standard Error	Confidence Interval Low	Confidence Interval Up	T Statistics	p Values
Accommodation and Catering -> Loyalty	0.045	0.016	0.079	0.020	2.889	0.004
Accommodation and Catering -> Satisfaction	0.195	0.050	0.305	0.106	3.855	0.000
Activities in Destination -> Loyalty	0.208	0.048	0.302	0.117	4.369	0.000
Activities in Destination -> Satisfaction	0.166	0.048	0.267	0.072	3.472	0.001
Destination Aesthetics -> Loyalty	0.052	0.016	0.083	0.024	3.185	0.002
Destination Aesthetics -> Satisfaction	0.223	0.046	0.313	0.134	4.911	0.000
Destination Marketing -> Loyalty	0.071	0.021	0.111	0.034	3.415	0.001
Destination Marketing -> Satisfaction	0.308	0.048	0.396	0.213	6.421	0.000
Environmental Preservation -> Loyalty	0.169	0.053	0.268	0.075	3.191	0.002
Natural Features -> Loyalty	0.261	0.050	0.353	0.162	5.259	0.000
Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0.231	0.052	0.326	0.127	4.453	0.000

**Table 7:** Information and classification criteria for varying number of segments

Criteria	Number of Segments		
	k = 2	k = 3	k = 4
AIC (Akaike's Information Criterion)	1769.5920	1835.5936	1997.7188
BIC (Bayesian Information Criteria)	1849.3729	1957.1645	2161.0798
CAIC (Consistent AIC)	1849.4365	1957.2614	2161.2099
EN (Normed Entropy Statistic)	0.5522	0.4847	0.4754

computed for two, three and four segments. A comparison of the segment-specific information and classification criteria is presented in Table 7. The analysis of these criteria reveals that the choice of two segments is appropriate for customer segmentation purposes. All information criteria increase and classification criterion decreases considerably in the ensuing numbers of classes. Moreover, each additional segment contains only a very small sample size.

Thus, observations were assigned to each segment according to their segment membership's maximum probability. The first segment represents 22.7 percent of the total sample, while the second segment represents 77.3 percent of the total sample.

Consequently, it could be stated that overall set of observations consists of a large, stable segment and a small fuzzy one.

Before evaluating inner model relationships, both segment-specific models were tested with regard to reliability and discriminant validity. Furthermore, the statistical significance of path coefficients was assessed.

The large, stable segment is segment number two and it contains 77.3 percent of the total sample. *R*-square values regarding this segment are substantial: *R*-square value of variable 'loyalty' is 52.1 percent; *R*-square value of variable 'satisfaction' is 52.8 percent. Thus, latter model has higher *R*-square values than the global model. Nevertheless, path coefficients in both global and segment No. 2 models are positive and statistically significant. Moreover, the highest influence on 'satisfaction' in both models is made by variable 'destination marketing'. Contrarily, the variable 'natural features' has the highest influence on 'loyalty' in the global model, while in the segment No. 2 model 'loyalty' is most strongly influenced

by variable ‘satisfaction’ (see Table 8). Despite this, all the remaining relations in these models are relatively similar, thus it could be stated that global model substantiates and corresponds to segment No. 2 model and their incorporation leads to the formation of the new general model.

On the other hand, segment No. 1 is the small fuzzy one. It contains only 22.7 percent of the total sample. *R*-square values regarding this segment are 43.5 percent of variable ‘loyalty’, 57 percent of variable ‘satisfaction’. The latter model contains only two statistically significant path coefficients – ‘destination aesthetics’ statistically significantly influences satisfaction and ‘natural features’ statistically significantly influence ‘loyalty’ (see Table 8).

However, only significant differences between the segments offer valuable interpretations. Thus, in order to assess whether segment-specific path coefficients differ significantly, PLS path modelling multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA) was applied. Consequently, as shown in the fourth column of Table 8 (*T* value for multi-group comparison test), four paths differ significantly between segment No. 1 model and segment No. 2 model. Thus, consumers in each segment exhibit significantly different drivers with respect to their satisfaction as well as loyalty. Particularly, the variable ‘destination aesthetics’ has low influence on ‘satisfaction’ concerning segment No. 2 model and very high influence on ‘satisfaction’ concerning segment No. 1 model. Furthermore, variable ‘destination marketing’ has a very high influence on ‘satisfaction’ with reference to segment No. 2 model and low, negative, statistically non-significant influence on ‘satisfaction’ with reference to segment No. 1 model. Moreover, the variables

‘environmental preservation’ and ‘satisfaction’ have negative and statistically non-significant effects on ‘loyalty’ regarding segment No. 1 model, while the same variables have high, positive and statistically significant effects on ‘loyalty’ regarding segment No. 2 model.

Consequently, it could be stated that incorporation of the global model with the segment No. 2 model leads to the formation of the final general model of the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania, which covers nearly 80 percent of the total sample. In addition, segment No. 1 model leads to the formation of the exceptional model and significant differences between these models allow differentiated marketing activities to satisfy varying customers’ expectations better.

## 6 Discussion

Incorporation of the global model with the segment No. 2 model led to the formation of the general model of the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania, covering nearly 80 percent of the total sample, which is presented in Figure 2. As it can be seen, ‘accommodation and catering’, ‘destination aesthetics’ and ‘destination marketing’ directly, positively and significantly affect tourists’ satisfaction with Lithuania. The most important determinant of foreign tourists’ satisfaction with Lithuania is ‘destination marketing’. Moreover, ‘activities in destination’ positively and directly influence ‘satisfaction’ as well as ‘loyalty’. Additionally, foreign tourists’ ‘loyalty’ to

**Table 8:** Path coefficients by segments

Variables	Path Coefficients		
	Segment 1 (Segment size = 22.7 %)	Segment 2 (Segment size = 77.3 %)	<i>T</i> (Multi-Group Analysis)
Accommodation and Catering ->Satisfaction	0.082	0.181*	0.858
Activities in Destination ->Loyalty	0.209	0.193*	0.052
Activities in Destination ->Satisfaction	0.129	0.165*	0.202
Destination Aesthetics ->Satisfaction	0.584*	0.123*	3.899*
Destination Marketing ->Satisfaction	-0.158	0.487*	2.460*
Environmental Preservation ->Loyalty	-0.445	0.267*	2.830*
Natural Features ->Loyalty	0.606*	0.187*	1.477
Satisfaction ->Loyalty	-0.415	0.303*	2.959*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Loyalty	0.435	0.521	-
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Satisfaction	0.570	0.528	-

\**p* < 0.05

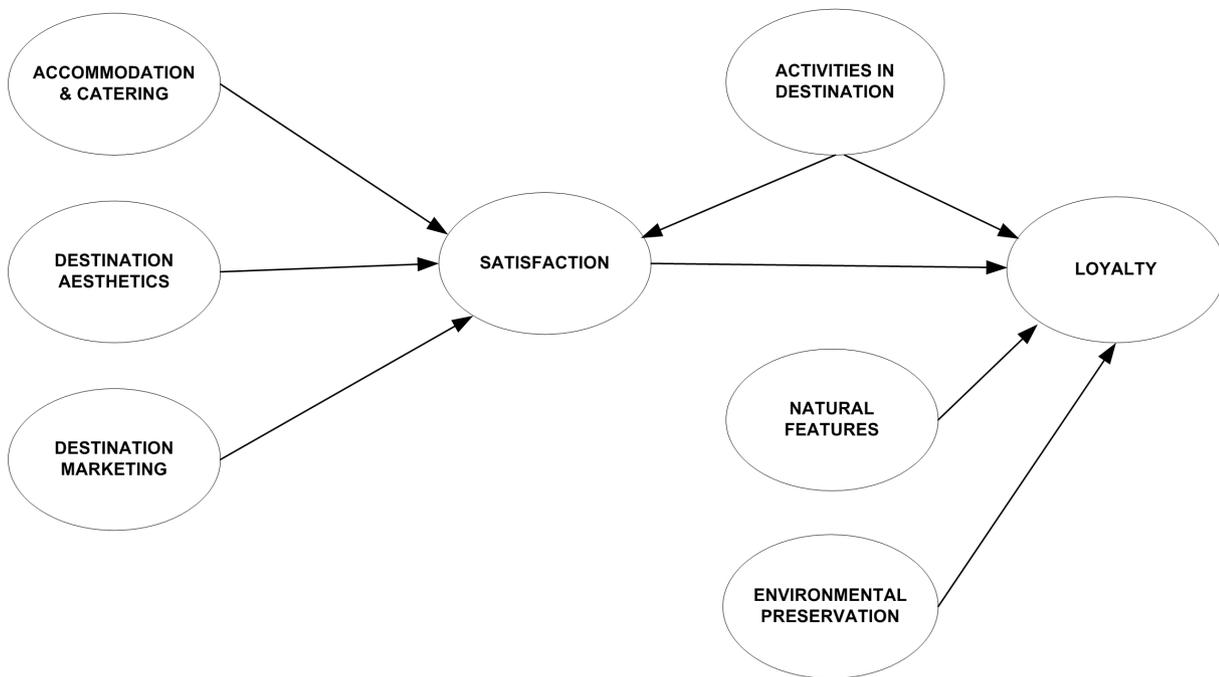


Figure 2: General Model of the Index of Tourist Satisfaction with Lithuania

Lithuania as tourism destination is influenced by ‘natural features’, ‘environmental preservation’ and tourists’ ‘satisfaction’ (the latter variable is the most important determinant of tourists’ ‘loyalty’).

Thus, the sequence of relations ‘destination marketing’ – ‘satisfaction’ – ‘loyalty’ becomes the base for strategies aiming at enhancing foreign tourists’ ‘satisfaction’ as well as ‘loyalty’ to Lithuania as a tourists’ destination.

As Lithuania is rarely considered as an independent tourist destination, rather one of the Baltic states, one of the ‘destination marketing’ indicators, which becomes crucial in this case, is positioning Lithuania as an exclusive, unique and independent tourists’ destination.

On the other hand, there is one small fuzzy tourists’ segment, in which relation ‘destination marketing’ – ‘satisfaction’ – loyalty’ could not be applied in order to enhance tourists’ ‘satisfaction’ and ‘loyalty’, because ‘destination marketing’ has no significant influence on ‘satisfaction’ as well as ‘satisfaction’ has no significant influence on ‘loyalty’. In this case, the exceptional model is formed: tourists’ loyalty is influenced by ‘natural features’; tourists’ ‘satisfaction’ is influenced by ‘destination aesthetics’. As ‘natural features’ usually require large investments from the government, this variable is considered as constant in the model. Thus, in order to present recommendations with regard to this segment and later variable, further researches must be provided. Alternatively,

with the aim of enhancing ‘satisfaction’ concerning this segment, ‘destination aesthetics’ has to be improved.

As explanatory variables that best characterise the two uncovered tourists’ segments are not assessed, the main investments’ saving mean that could enhance tourists’ ‘satisfaction’ and ‘loyalty’ to Lithuania as tourists’ destination is joint improvement of ‘destination marketing’ and ‘destination aesthetics’. Consequently, most important determinants of tourists’ satisfaction with regard to both segments would be superior and this would lead Lithuania to excel in the region.

## 7 Conclusions

Lithuania is rarely considered as an independent tourist destination, rather only as one of the Baltic states. Thus, there exists necessity for Lithuania to excel in the region, because travel and tourism industry contribute to the national economy. For this reason, foreign tourist satisfaction is very important for the country. So far, tourists mainly arrive from bordering countries: Poland, Russia, Latvia and Belarus. Further significant countries for tourism in Lithuania are Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy.

The analysis of the research results revealed that foreign tourists in Lithuania can be divided into a large,

stable segment and a small fuzzy one. Incorporation of the elaborated global model with the large, stable segment's model led to the formation of the general model of the index of tourist satisfaction of Lithuania. Consequently, it can be stated that 'accommodation and catering', 'destination aesthetics' and 'destination marketing' affect tourists' satisfaction with Lithuania. The most important determinant of foreign tourists' satisfaction with Lithuania is 'destination marketing'. Moreover, 'activities in destination' influence 'satisfaction' as well as 'loyalty'. Additionally, foreign tourists' 'loyalty' to Lithuania as tourism destination is influenced by 'natural features', 'environmental preservation' and tourists' 'satisfaction', which is the most important determinant of tourists' 'loyalty'.

The sequence of relations 'destination marketing' – 'satisfaction' – 'loyalty' becomes the base for strategies aiming at enhancing foreign tourists' 'satisfaction' as well as 'loyalty' to Lithuania as tourist destination. The crucial indicator with regard to 'destination marketing' is positioning Lithuania as an exclusive, unique and independent tourist destination. Furthermore, with the aim of enhancing 'satisfaction' concerning both segments, 'destination aesthetics' has to be improved as well. Consequently, improving determinants against other Baltic states would lead Lithuania to excel in the region.

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