

Settlement event satisfaction survey in the shade of the COVID epidemic

Zsuzsanna Slezák-Bartos¹

¹University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development; E-mail: slezak-bartos.zsuzsanna@pte.hu

Abstract

The settlement can be successful if the income in the settlement is constantly growing, new companies are settling down, giving jobs to the residents, as well as through cultural, entertainment opportunities and programs, the city management can provide meaningful pastimes for the local residents. The provision of cultural activities has a multifaceted impact on the development of the local economy. By developing or expanding the cultural capabilities, not only the quality of life of the local population can be improved, but also significant economic benefits can be achieved with proper organizational work. Although the crisis caused by the coronavirus epidemic poses a challenge to the economy, the tourism sector, city management and local cooperation need to continue the work started, services such as entertainment, sports, leisure recreation and cultural opportunities in the line with local preferences need to be expanded. The aim of the study is to find out the satisfaction of the people living in the Tolna county seat about the events and organized events. Moreover also looking for an answer how the popularity of Szekszárd wine region events among local residents changed as a result of the crisis caused by the coronavirus. Empirical research – by the opinions of local residents of Szekszárd, students and workers in the city - is based on online questionnaires, in-depth interviews and personal experiences.

Keywords: wine tourism, local development, event analysis

Introduction

Among the tourist attractions in the capital of Tolna County, we can mention the historical wine region directly affecting Szekszárd, but the proximity of forests (the Gemenc) and folk art are also well-understood attractions on which the marketing of the city can build. The individual activity of local winemakers is outstanding in the region. In addition to their own wineries and cellars, the winemakers also offer catering and accommodation. The most successful of the

wine-related events is the Szekszárd Harvest Days, held every third weekend in September. The organisation and running of the event is a good example of the cooperation between entrepreneurs and winemakers, who help to set up the Wine Court, finance bands and ensembles, build pavilions, etc. Cultural activities are varied, with cultural events linked to Mihály Babits, the native of Szekszárd, the commemorative day and conference for Miklós Mészöly, and events for Ferenc Liszt. By increasing the frequency of events, perhaps as a 'city of festivals', or by adding 'city of arts' to the image of cultural events and art exhibitions, city leaders could add more substance to the message. (Máté & Nagy, 2015) The COVID period also had a marked impact on the main event of the city, the Szekszárd Harvest Days, as the event was not held in 2020 and was held in 2021 in a different form with a narrower offering, under the name Autumn Festival. Due to the protection regulations and obligations, the number of visitors to the event was also greatly reduced, which also affected the satisfaction of the city's residents with the events and cultural offers.

Theoretical background and methodology

Events and activities organised in the settlement play a prominent role. The marketing strategy used should help to develop the urban economy, improve the image of the town and increase consumption, as the same area means different things to a very diverse target market. The urban product is more complex than consumer goods, as the product is identified with the territory itself, the region, and the settlement (Gordos, 2000; Kozma, 2002). Wine is currently more successful as a tourist attraction than as a commercial product (Angler, 2017). Positioning and branding is a key tasks of territorial marketing. (Molnár et al., 2015) The development of wine tourism, the creation of wine routes, clusters, new events also helps to strengthen community wine marketing (Gonda & Raffay, 2015; Gonda, 2017; Máté et al., 2015b; Máté 2007). Tourists arriving in Szekszárd associate Szekszárd with wine, the wine region, winemakers, wine roads and the harvest festival, meaning that the success of local winemakers is widely known and has become a prominent element of the positive image of the city. It can be stated that in the last decade, the number of wineries producing internationally competitive wines a significant increase was reached, the establishment of architecturally outstanding wineries, accommodation facilities and processing plants (Slezák-Bartos et al., 2016). The strengthening of wine tourism improves the tourism situation in Szekszárd, but excessive single-leg tourism makes it vulnerable in the market. The local society demands the revival and preservation of traditions, in which traditional groups have a major role to play. The Szekszárd

Harvest Days have the merit of keeping these traditions alive, as they have been organised every year since 1970. The fact that the event was able to be renewed in 2005 has its huge importance, both in terms of content and form, so in terms of programmes, venues, wine pavilions, name and logo, which was an essential condition for current successes. At the same time, the wines and wineries of Szekszárd have also undergone a huge development over the last twenty years, which has laid the foundations for the quality wine services offered by the festival. The civil organisations of winemakers have been strengthened, through which they have expressed their expectations of the event and even become co-organisers through the Szekszárd Wine Region Nonprofit Ltd. (Angler, 2016). Thanks to the qualitative change in the festival and wine pavilions, many more winemakers participate in the Wine Court than in the years before 2005. The current wine pavilions not only provide a more cultured venue for wine tasting but also foster cooperation between winemakers, as two wineries usually present themselves in one pavilion (Máté et al., 2015 a; Slezák-Bartos & Horváth, 2017). In Szekszárd, tourists coming to the festival are given a special focus on getting to know the wine region and wineries, even the possibility of meeting the winemakers in person; it can be assumed that they will be keen to participate in wine festivals, wine tastings, wine dinners and gastro festivals on other occasions as well (Gonda, 2017). At the same time, what is seen, heard and read in the media, what is experienced in person, and what is said by relatives and acquaintances all feed the developed image of a given locality (Michalkó, 2014). The active role of local authorities is a prerequisite for the development of tourism, as they are responsible, among other things, for the environment of the settlements, the protection of the architectural heritage, the maintenance of streets and squares, and the drawing up of local development plans (Spiegler, 2009).

In the study, which was carried out by means of a questionnaire survey among people living in Szekszárd, the interviews were random, voluntary and anonymous. The survey was conducted online and offline using simple random sampling. The online questionnaire was published on social media platforms. Offline, the questionnaires were completed by people in the older age group, the results of which were later recorded on the online interface. For the open-ended questions, respondents were given the opportunity to comment freely. For statistical processing, the majority of the question types were closed questions (with predefined answers) and questions with answers on a rating scale (1 to 5 numbers). During the processing, summary charts showing ratios and averages were produced from the Excel database. In the current study, the questionnaire

survey was used to investigate the perception of events in Szekszárd County during the Covid and the Closures periods.

Research results

According to KSH data, 34,296 people were living in Szekszárd in 2011, which is 1933 fewer than ten years earlier. According to the 2011 data, 46.34% of Szekszárd's population is male and 53.66% female. The most populous age group in the settlement was the 55-59 age group, so by 2014, the group of those people in immediate retirement became most likely to be the widest, and considering the age groups before that, a virtually continuous increase could be expected. (KSH, 2011) The last estimated population of Szekszárd in 2019 was 32 488, which was 0.33% of the population of Hungary at that time, and 14.81% of Tolna County. If the population would change at the same rate as in 2018 and 2019 (-1.47%/year), the population of Szekszárd would be 32 009 in 2020 and 31 073 in 2022 (nepesseg.com, 2022). The resident population is defined as the combined number of persons residing in a given area and not residing elsewhere and the number of persons residing in the same area (www.teir.hu).

104 respondents living/working in Szekszárd participated in the questionnaire survey. A minority of the respondents were male (29.8%), and a larger proportion were female (70.2%). All age groups are represented in the sample, 13.5% were in the young age group (18-29 years), 23.1% were in the 30-39 years age group, 41.3% were in the 40-49 years age group, 50-59 years olds accounted for 13.5% and 60-69 years olds 6.7%, and over 70 years olds 1.9%.

73.1% of the respondents have a tertiary education, 66.3% described their financial circumstances as average and 76% live in a household of 2-4 persons. The low response rate can be explained by the high proportion of respondents with higher education, while those with lower education are unlikely to consider it relevant to participate in the survey and express their views. 88.6% of respondents work or study in Szekszárd.

Only events organised from February 2020 to 2021 were included in the survey. For several events, I examined the years 2020 and 2021 separately, as the relevant legislation, the mood, attitude and possibilities of the city residents, as well as the possibilities and obligations of the event organisers and the municipality and city administration were different in the two years (Figure 1).

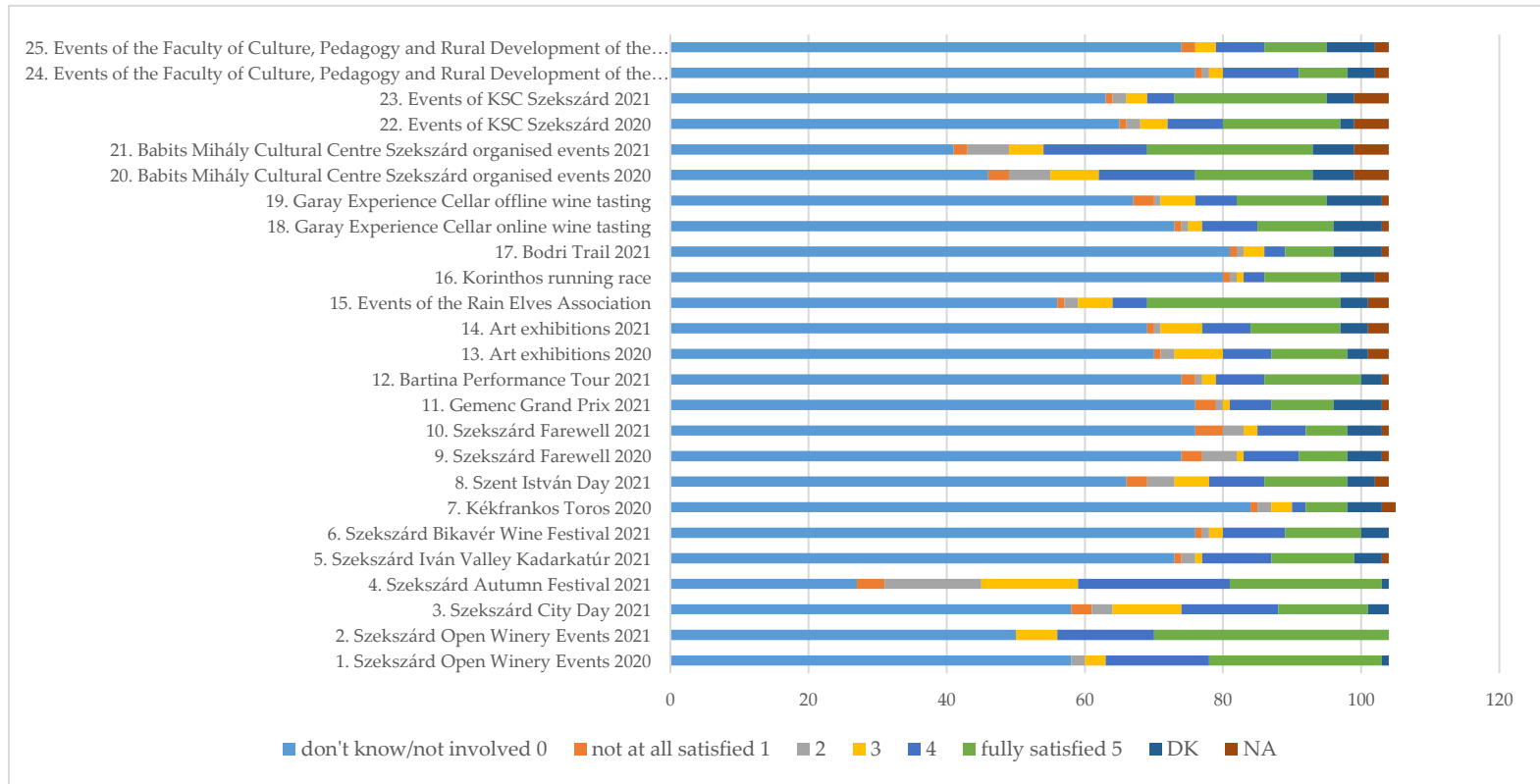


Figure 1. Participation and satisfaction in events from February 2020 to the end of 2021 (Rating from 0 to 5; 0 means "don't know/not involved", 1 means "not at all satisfied", 5 means "fully satisfied", DK/NA means "don't know/no answer".) Source: Own compilation based on questionnaire survey, 2022

When looking at events, it can be seen that in 2021, organisers were more bold in organising events in greater numbers, assessing demand-side needs. In 2020, there was still a high level of uncertainty, both on the demand and supply side, during the full closures and the post-summer period. Also in 2021, events that met the legal framework and the strict immunity requirements were the most likely to be organised. Looking at the satisfaction results, it is clear that for almost all events, a larger, more pronounced proportion of respondents did not participate/did not know about the existence of the event; they did not rate it. From the satisfaction data, I would like to highlight the events organised and run by the Babits Mihály Cultural Centre in 2021, of which 37.5% of respondents rated between 4 and 5. The Szekszárd Autumn Festival, organised by the city administration during the Szekszárd Harvest Days, should be mentioned. The reception of the event, the satisfaction survey in this case was double - almost a third of the respondents (30.8%) rated the event with a 3 or less, while more than a fifth of the respondents (21.2%) were completely satisfied with the organisation of the event.

Considering Szekszárd's characteristics, it is not surprising that among the services relevant to the events, respondents highlighted wine-tasting opportunities and offerings (Figure 2).

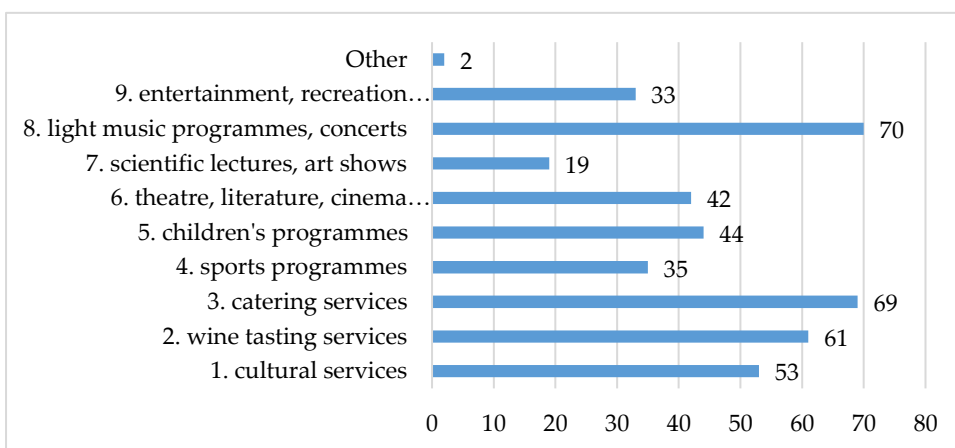


Figure 2. Services used and frequency of participation in events (Several answers were possible) Source: Own compilation based on a questionnaire survey, 2022

According to the results of Figure 3, respondents informed themselves extensively before visiting events; they mentioned several aspects and sources of information, the most frequently mentioned by respondents were family,

relatives and friends, acquaintances, in order to follow up on current information (Figure 3). According to the research, Radio Antritt plays an important role in the news gathering of the residents in Szekszárd.

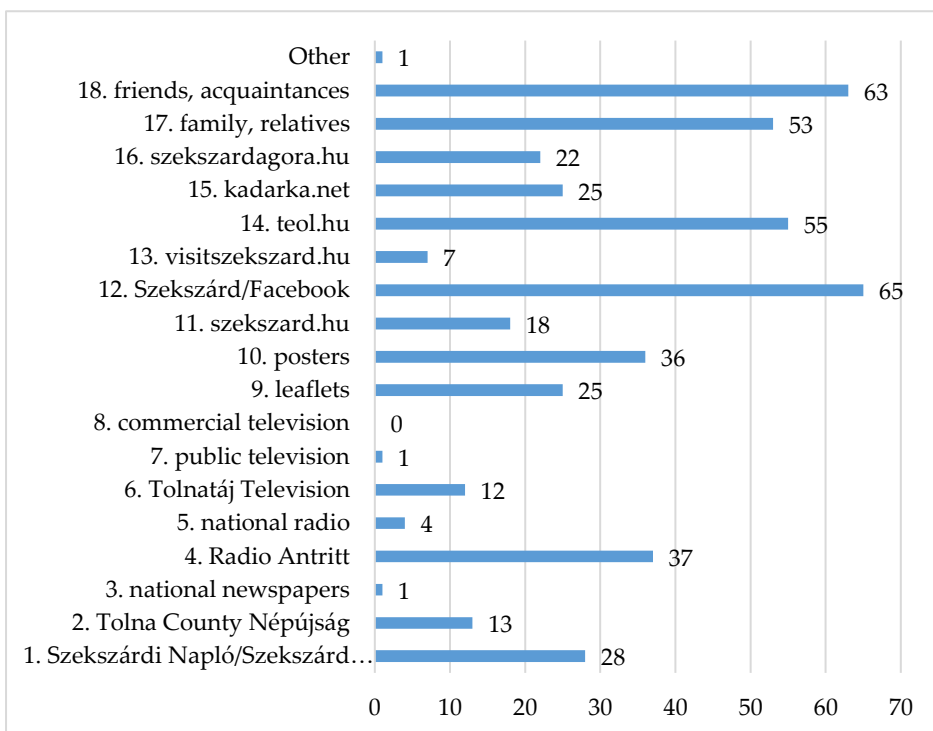


Figure 3. *Information gathering on events in Szekszárd (Several answers were possible)*
 Source: Own compilation based on questionnaire survey, 2022

Attitudes can be shaped by personal experience and changing needs, selective perception. Based on this, we interpret reality according to our individual abilities, attitudes about products and brands are determined, and the personality of the buyer and his/her group relations strongly influence the experience. Attitudes are not directly observable, but can only be inferred from the communication and actions of individuals (Dörnyei & Pethő, 2019).

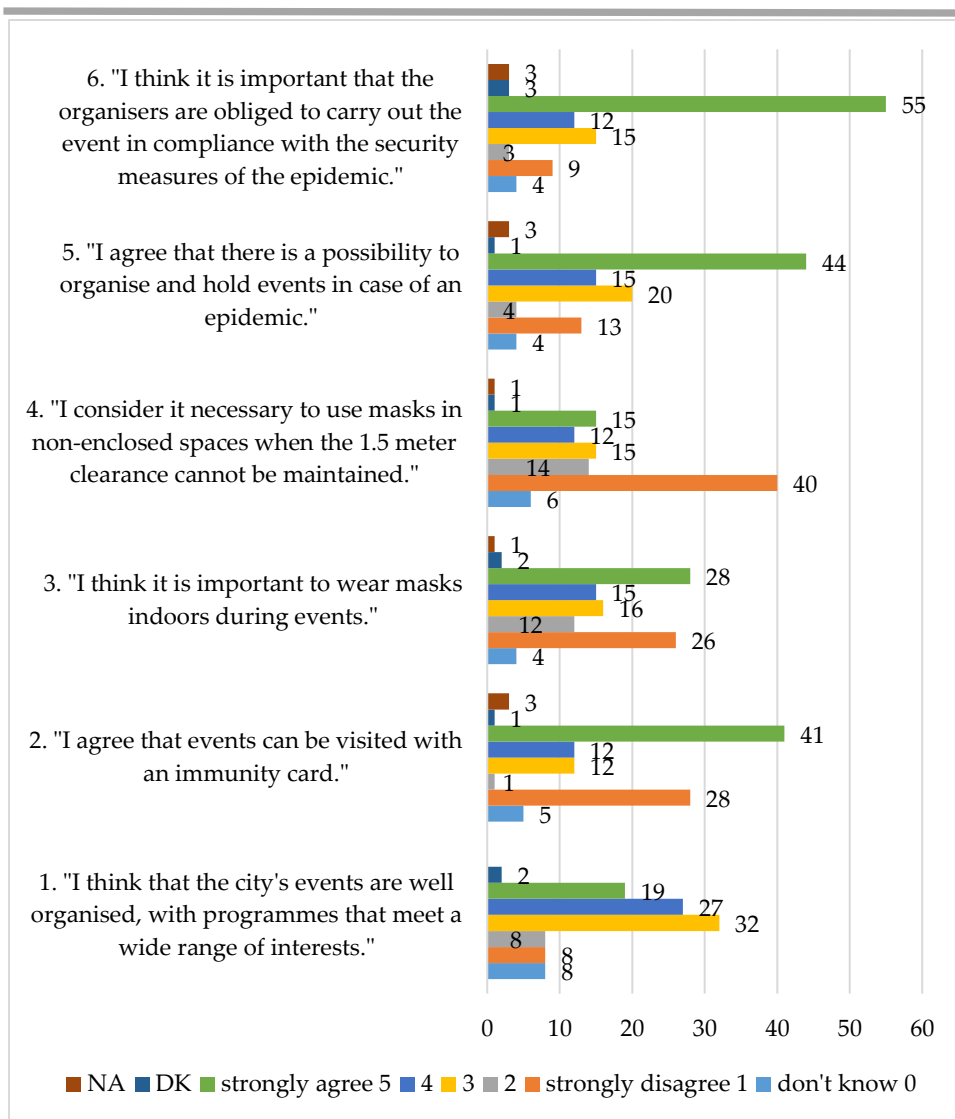


Figure 4. Attitudes towards organised events in Szekszárd (The statements refer only to events organised after February 2020. Please rate from 0 to 5! 0 means "don't know", 1 means "strongly disagree", 5 means "strongly agree", NT/NV means "don't know/no answer".) Source: Own compilation based on a questionnaire survey, 2022

Hungarian customer types have been defined along several grouping variables, such as gender, generational affiliation or trend affinity (Törőcsik, 2017). However, attitudes can also be influenced by different mentalities, habitus and circumstances (Földi, 2012). In Figure 4, I summarised the results of the attitudinal

attitudes towards the events in Szekszárd. The aim was to explore agreement on the organisational obligations period - immunity card checks, strict security regulations at events, mask-wearing - and resistance to the rules on the part of the residents during the emergency caused by the coronavirus. More than half of the respondents (55.9%) agree that it is important for organisers to organise events in the light of security measures in the event of an epidemic; 42.3% agree that it is possible to organise and hold events in the event of an epidemic. The requirement to wear a mask in a closed area and the requirement to have an immunity card for visiting events already showed a double picture. 26.9% of respondents consider the use of masks in enclosed spaces during events to be of full importance, while 25% of respondents answered completely negatively. 39.4% of the respondents fully agree that events can be visited with an immunity card, while 26.9% are completely against its use.

Conclusion and discussion

The pandemic has caused uncertainty in the organisation and delivery of events, both on the supply and demand side. The supply of events has changed, a greater number of events were organised outside than in enclosed spaces. In addition to sport and cultural events, wine and the wine region have become a central theme. Events that attracted large crowds are almost disappeared or attracted a narrower range of consumers and were organised in a controlled way, within a legal framework. The results of the research show that city dwellers were primarily looking for leisure and gastronomic experiences. In 2021, there was a greater and bolder interest in events than in 2020. Event attendees marked light music, concerts, dining, and wine tasting as their primary goals of attending events. The research shows that the organisation of events is also considered important by residents during an epidemic, but participants also consider it necessary to ensure that safety measures are fully respected.

References

- Angler, K. (2016). *Successful practices of formal and informal cooperation for wine tourism in Szekszárd*. In. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. 51-63.
- Angler, K. (2017). *Wine tasting through the eyes of the restaurateur I.: Wine tasting as a gastronomic event*. In Máté A. (ed.), *Modern University - Utilizable Knowledge*. 3-36.
- Dörnyei, O., & Pethő, B. (2019). In. Veres, Z., Sasné, G. A., & Liska, F, (eds.) *Do we know the buyer? The psychology of buying : Proceedings of the XXV National Conference of the Association for Marketing Education and Research*. Pannon University, 615-635.

- Földi, K. (2012). "Consumer choice decisions in food-oriented retailing", PhD thesis, University of Pécs, Faculty of Economics, Doctoral School of Regional Politics and Economics.
- Gonda, T. (2014). Regional experiences of tourism cluster development in South Transdanubia. *Modern Geography* 9(3) 1-16.
- Gonda, T. (2017). PTE KPVK, Szekszárd p. 226.
- Gonda, T., & Raffay, Z. (2015). Egyedül nem megy – fogyatékkal élők utazási szokásainak vizsgálata egy nemzetközi felmérés eredményeinek tükrében *The Village*, 30(1), 49-58.
- Gordos, T. (2000). A városmarketing néhány kérdése. *Tér és Társadalom*, 14(2-3).
- Kozma, G. (2002). *Area and settlement marketing*. Kossuth University Publishing House.
- KSH (2011). 2011. ÉVI NÉPSZÁMLÁLÁS Tolna megye http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/ftp/idoszaki/nepsz2011/nepsz_03_17_2011.pdf
- Máté A., & Nagy E. (2015). A turizmusfejlesztés szerepe és hatása a versenyképességre, a település imázsra és az arculatra. *Településföldrajzi Tanulmányok*, 4(2), 94-107.
- Máté, A. (2007). Comparative evaluation of the wine routes of the "Pannonian wine region". *Modern Geography*, 2(4), 16-31.
- Máté, A., Slezák-Bartos, Zs. & Vas Gáborné, G. Zs. (2015). A fesztiválturizmus fejlődése és korlátai Szekszárdon. In Darabos, F., & Ivancsóné, H. Zs. (eds.), *Turizmus határok nélkül: VII. Nemzetközi Turizmus Konferencia 2015: Tanulmányok*. Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetem Kiadó, Sopron. 266-282.
- Máté, A., Spiegler, P., Angler, K., & Krizl, E. (2015). A bormarketing innovatív trendjei. In Horváth, B. (ed.), *Tolna megye egyik húzóágazatának a jövője: Szőlészeti – Borászati Trendkutatás*. (88-128). PTE, Pécs. 88-128.
- Michalkó, G. (2014). Városimázs és versenyképesség: a turizmusorientált településmarketing néhány aspektusa. In Tózsa, I. (ed.), *Turizmus és településmarketing: Tanulmánykötet*. BCE Gazdaságföldrajz és Jövőkutatás Tanszék, Budapest. 37-46.
- Nepesseg.com (2022). Szekszárd népessége. <http://nepesseg.com/tolna/szekszard>
- Slezák-Bartos, Zs., & Horváth, Z. (2017). Marketing kommunikáció hagyományos eszközei a turizmusban - elméleti alapok. In Máté, A. (ed.), *Modern egyetem - hasznosítható tudás*. PTE Kultúratudományi, Pedagógusképző és Vidékfejlesztési Kar, Szekszárd. 104-118)
- Slezák-Bartos, Zs., Vas-Guld, Zs., Angler, K., & Krizl, E. (2016) "Creative development - creative city" based on a good practice. In Gonda, T. (ed.) *Current issues of tourism and rural development in the Carpathian Basin*. Faculty of Culture, Pedagogy and Rural Development, Szekszárd, PTE. 68-86.
- Spiegler, P. (2009). A turisztikai imázs és a területi identitás jelentősége a térségi marketingben. *Területfejlesztés és innováció*, 3(1), 16-23.
- Sulyok, J. (2006). A turisztikai imázs. *Turizmus Bulletin*, 10(4), 55–62.
- TEIR.hu (n.d.). *Helyzet-tér-kép*. <https://www.teir.hu/helyzet-ter-kep/kivalasztott-mutatok.html> Letöltés dátuma: 2022.10.11.
- Törőcsik, M. (2017). Consumer behaviour - Insight, trends, buyers. Akadémiai Kiadó.