

# **Analysis of Customer's Satisfaction with Passenger Transportation Belonging to Bus Transport Company Student Agency in the Czech Republic**

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Bachelor's thesis  
2016



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities

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Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně  
Fakulta humanitních studií  
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur  
akademický rok: 2015/2016

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

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Osobní číslo: **H12934**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**  
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Analýza spokojenosti zákazníků s přepravními službami autobusové dopravy společnosti Student Agency v České republice**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Zpracujte literární rešerši k problematice spokojenosti zákazníků.  
Popište přepravní služby prováděné společností Student Agency v autobusové dopravě.  
Analyzujte spokojenost zákazníků se službami společnosti Student Agency.  
Navrhňte zlepšení služeb společnosti v přepravě osob.

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tištěná/elektronická

Seznam odborné literatury:

Haig, Matt. 2004. Brand Loyalty. London: Kogan Page.

Kaftan, Miroslav. 2012. A Handbook of Modern Business Office. Praha: Nakladatelství Karolinum.

Morgan, Nigel, Pritchard Annette, and Roger Pride. 2002. Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Robbins, Stephen, and David De Cenzo. 2001. Fundamentals of Management. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Souček, Zdeněk. 2005. Firma 21. Století: Předstihneme Nejlepší. Praha: Professional Publishing.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

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Ústav managementu a marketingu

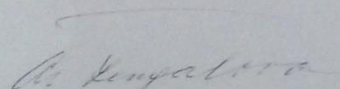
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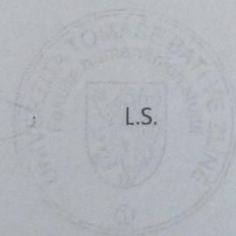
13. listopadu 2015

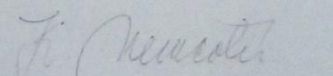
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

6. května 2016

Ve Zlíně dne 10. prosince 2015

  
doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.  
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je identifikovat a následně analyzovat spokojenost zákazníků se službami společnosti Student Agency. Tato práce je rozdělena na část teoretickou a praktickou. V teoretické části je definována spokojenost zákazníků jako taková, ale také pojmy jako NPS, CRM či CSR. Praktická část poté identifikuje jednotlivé strategie společnosti Student Agency, které podniká směrem k zákazníkům, jejich ohodnocení a percepce zákazníky. Závěr bakalářské práce je věnován návrhům možného budoucího vývoje, zlepšení vnímání hodnoty značky Student Agency a spokojenosti zákazníků s jejich službami.

Klíčová slova: Student Agency, Autobusová odprava, CRM, NPS, CRS, Marketingový mix, hodnota pro zákazníka

## **ABSTRACT**

Main objective of this bachelor thesis is to identify and analyze satisfaction of customers with services of a company Student Agency. This thesis is divided into theoretical and practical part. In theoretical part is described satisfaction of customers as such, also terms as NPS, CRM and CSR are covered. In practical part are identified particular strategies of a company Student Agency, which they do towards their customers, its evaluation and perception of the customers. The end of this bachelor thesis is focused on possible following development and improvement of perception of brand Student Agency as well as satisfaction of customers with their services.

Keywords: Student Agency, Bus transportation, CRM, NPS, CSR, Marketing Mix, Customers Value

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor doc. Ing. Miloslava Chovancová, CSc, for providing me with valuable advice and patient guidance throughout the whole process of writing my bachelor thesis.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank Kristýna Štecová and Jakub Kuriál for their time spent on grammatical and spelling revision of my bachelor thesis.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for giving me an opportunity to study at Tomas Bata University in Zlín and for their support throughout my whole life.

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>I THEORY</b>	
<b>1 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1 FINDING CUSTOMER NEEDS .....	12
<b>2 NET PROMOTER SCORE.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3 CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 BENEFITS OF CRM .....	16
3.2 THE CRM STRATEGY THROUGH SWOT ANALYSIS.....	17
<b>4 SWOT ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 INTERNAL POINT OF VIEW .....	18
4.2 EXTERNAL POINT OF VIEW.....	18
4.3 WEAK SIGNALS.....	19
<b>5 CUSTOMER POLITICS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 LOYALTY OF CUSTOMERS.....	21
<b>6 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN BUSINESS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
6.1 FEATURES OF CSR ACTIVITIES .....	22
6.2 WHAT CSR BRINGS TO THE COMPANY .....	23
6.3 CSR ACTIVITIES AND CUSTOMERS .....	23
6.4 FOCUS ON CUSTOMERS .....	24
<b>7 MARKETING MIX.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8 VALUE FOR CUSTOMER .....</b>	<b>26</b>
8.1 CUSTOMER VALUE .....	26
8.2 VALUE CULTURE .....	27
<b>II ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>9 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10 STUDENT AGENCY – COMPANY PROFILE .....</b>	<b>32</b>
10.1 HISTORY.....	32
10.2 PHILOSOPHY OF THE COMPANY .....	34
10.3 PORTFOLIO.....	34
<b>11 PRODUCT – BUS SERVICE .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>12 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>37</b>
12.1 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS.....	37
12.2 DECISIVE FACTORS .....	40
12.3 QUALITATIVE QUESTION .....	42
<b>13 QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPANY STUDENT AGENCY.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>14 SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT .....</b>	<b>66</b>
14.1 STRATEGIES FOR THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	66
14.2 STRATEGIES FOR MORAVIAN-SILESIA REGION, ZLÍN REGION AND SOUTH MORAVIAN REGION.....	69
14.2.1 Moravian-Silesian Region .....	69



14.2.2 Zlín Region .....	70
14.2.3 South Moravian Region .....	71
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>LIST OF GRAPHS .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>80</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, in the Czech Republic were established many companies. All these companies aim for only one thing and it is success. However, only satisfied customers determine successful or unsuccessful companies. Customers require higher and higher standards and their decisive factors are complex. Company needs to focus on their strengths, observe the opportunities that market offers, be aware of weak points and also count with threads. Once they are on market, battle of being first choice service provider for customers might begin. Student Agency has wide portfolio of products. Yet, not everyone knows nor uses their services. Penetration of market is long-term goal for a company which is younger than two decades.

During years, Student Agency became admired and inspiring company due to their innovations and complex services. Now the company is in growth phase. Every year there is implementation of new systems, buying new vehicles or suggested spreading net of trails. Meanwhile, they need to pay attention to their competitors and constant benchmarking. Thanks to the international connections abroad, Student Agency connects the Czech Republic and customers from all over the Europe for accurate price.

The main objective of this bachelor thesis is primarily to describe customer satisfaction and tools which companies use to control, manage and measure the relationship between customers and company. Secondly, analyze which aspects are most relevant for customers and which have the decisive factors. Decisive factors are conditions, which clients have and which can reflect into their decision process about service from which company to use.

As for the practical part, survey filled by 583 respondents reveals the opinion about whole company, about level of satisfaction with their services and evaluate the experience as such. Last part of this thesis consists of suggestions for possible improvement of bus services of Student Agency.

## **I. THEORY**

## **1 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

According to business dictionary (2015), customer satisfaction is described as level of utility of the service. Whether company is successful or not is customer's decision. The degree of satisfaction is crucial for future purchases. Provided goods and services of a company is measured by the number of repeated purchases. Satisfied customer should be company's priority number one. It is vital to know requirements and expectations of customers and whether company's products or services fulfilled these attributes. Measurements and quantifications require a lot of effort which might not be always accurate. In case of production e.g. shoes, it is rare to get feedback from final customer to shoe maker. It is much more complicated when producer does not know the user personally, because purchaser is the one who sells the shoes to customers. The most common feedback is complaint when goods or services are considered as inadequate.

In the book Total Quality Management (Frehr, 1995,16) is detailed description of an increasing trend in customer's requirement in comparison with situation 10 year ago. Management of company should be always one step ahead because what is good enough today might not fit for tomorrow's needs. When goods or services bring no use to customer, they will decide not to buy it anymore. Therefore, company gets in trouble. Meanwhile, marketing department should constantly look for answers what the market needs and how to keep updated.

### **1.1 Finding out customer needs**

According to Frehr (1995, 115), there are many ways how to measure expecting requirement from customers such as

- 1) Questionnaire – direct asking potential customers
- 2) Results of cases from the most important market
- 3) Systematic evaluation of queries and complaints
- 4) Benchmarking
- 5) Suggestions for improvement from inside of company

1) *Questionnaire* is valid source of information about customer's needs. It can be in written version or spoken version. All questions should be structured and objective. For easier evaluation it is better to use closed questions or give an option, but also it should give a space for open questions and suggestions. Questionnaire can be provided by company's department or independent organization. When provided by company's department, questions and also answers can be distorted. When provided by neutral independent organization it might be harder to access the customer but answers will be more objective and revealing. Even though is independent observer also cost of company, it is preferred way how to observe customer needs.

2) *Results of cases from the most important market* are used when company plans to expand to foreign markets or abroad. It is recommended to pay attention to foreign policies and restrictions before it happens.

3) *Systematic evaluation of queries and complaints* means to collect all data from every contact with customers (feedbacks, written complaints, consulting etc.) Collected data should be archived, elaborated and used wisely. This should help promoters to consolidate the facts and also work with weaknesses they found out.

4) *Benchmarking* is nowadays very common method how to keep up with competitors. Via this method it is easier to know strengths and weaknesses of company product but to know customer's view, too. Every late innovation can be decisive moment for company's success or failure (e.g. Nokia, Kodak).

5) *Suggestions for improvement from inside of company* means that even workers and sellers can see space for improvement of their own job. They should effectively collect data from all departments and consolidate for future improvement. (Frehr, 1995)

Frehr (1995, 142) also believes that collected data is meaningful only if consolidated and realized changes for improvement. Data are lost easily or they change fast. It is highly recommended for company to make SWOT analysis and be aware of strengths, weaknesses, threads and opportunities. Company must also watch over trends to remain relevant choice for customers.

## 2 NPS – NET PROMOTER SCORE

Tyler Banfield (2015) points out that it may seem like customer's satisfaction is not top 1 priority for company management. They need to deal with business plan, revenues and expenditures so why to spend precious time with analysis how customer is thinking? Answer is simple. Because at one point in life of business comes the moment when revenues are not as high as they were expected to be. Here comes the misunderstanding between customer and seller, the demand and the supply. Useful way how to measure satisfaction is via Net Promoter Scores (NPS). Customers shall evaluate their satisfaction on a scale from 0-10 and how likely they would recommend the services of company to their friends or relatives. Companies who measure NPS are a third more likely to have growth rates over 10% a year only thanks to understanding needs of their clients. (Banfield 2015)

Survio website (2015) describes NPS as specialized methodology focused on feedbacks from customers and employees.

- it shows loyalty
- it is dividing customers into clusters
- it gives immediate feedback
- it helps to bring better retention rate
- it correlates with financial turnover
- it anticipates trends
- it is universal metrics for all kinds of fields

All in all, Fred Reichheld (2015) claims that NPS is considered as a leading indicator of growth. It all starts with simple question "How likely would you recommend the brand to a friend?". Based of answer, it can be divided scale from 0-10 points, it will show the group of detractors, passives and promoters.

*Detractors* are in general unhappy customers who are not satisfied with products and they rate our services from 0-6. They have no enthusiasm about the brand or product. Company can expect spreading of negative experience with the firm and bad word-of-mouth or in better cases neutral consequences. Such a customer will not likely recommend the company nor is willing to use company's services again.

*Passives* are customers who rated company's services 7-8 and they are rather satisfied but not enthusiastic about provided services. They might be sensitive to competitive offers and indecisive. Company cannot count with future purchases again.

*Promoters* are customers who are satisfied and enthusiastic about services they have received (NPS 8<). Company's management can expect spreading praise and recognition of good experience among other customers. These customers would recommend services to friends and other people or even urge them to buy.

Main goal of a company is to have higher NPS than its competitors. Increase the number of promoters and eliminate number of detractors should be company's priority. Higher NPS means bigger chance to more likely outperform the market, faster growth, increasing profits and therefore their business performance. NPS is recommended to use as a foundation of a measurement that is related to customer journey.

Reichheld explains that NPS can also work as an instrument of defining a brand position on market, finding a loop-hole in organization and also filling the loop-hole once they are found. Net promoter program starts to be useful when integrated into daily activities of functional areas. All the operations happening inside sales, marketing, production etc. are related and should be customized as much as possible. Data collected from NPS must not get lost in process. It is recommended to ensure customers that company is working on constant improvement and development of services. They should prove how customer's voice is valuable for the firm. (Reichheld 2016)

### 3 CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT

In his book called Active approach towards customer, Harry Wessling writes about Customer Relation Management. CRM represents a chance to make long-time profitable connection with customers. This increases chance to succeed on market. There are four main features of CRM: people, technology, content and processes. If company wants to implement CRM into current organization, it is necessary to focus on qualification of personnel, technology equipment, business processes and data management. To sum up, it means every interaction between company and customer. (Wessling, 2003) CRM is useful in practice only when included all features. If included only one feature, project is predestined to fail. CRM is not purposeless method or new trend in marketing area. CRM is new solution which caused revolution that can be compared to marketing in saturated market era. CRM is complex organizational unit which is superior to areas such as marketing, sales, human resources, controlling etc. (Wessling, 2003)

*Relation towards customer has habitually some phases:*

- 1) Perception of company value
- 2) Establishment of contact
- 3) Development of relationship
- 4) Consolidation
- 5) Decay of relationship
- 6) End of relationship

Wessling (2003) believes that the initiative should start with solicitation from company's side even when customer sees website as first contact. If customer was contacted, here comes the phase two – development and consolidation. When customer or company does not find this relationship increasing on value, it probably will decay and end. Customer-company relations should not be maintained at all costs. It is essential to know relevance of each other and should be economically profitable for both sides (win-win situation).

#### 3.1 Benefits of CRM

Implementation and usage of CRM can bring some advantages which might lead to certain profit. A part from that, CRM brings measurable advantages and effects which may occur in longer period of time. In short time, company will notice non-problematic course of business processes. Thanks to one united database full of information about customers it



brings together marketing, sales and production. CRM can bring also more individual interactions with customers, meaning call centrums, automation of sales, e-marketing etc. Due to automation, company might have more time for customers and use it more effectively. (Wessling, 2003, 63)

CRM will determine company from competitors and can improve it's image easily. When recommending services to friend, people are usually honest with satisfaction or dissatisfaction so companies must be aware of power that word-of –mouth has. CRM as database is valuable source of fast-spreading information. It shows exact number of interactions towards customers and other useful information. Faster data validation means faster understanding of customer's needs and also proper reactions towards market changes. Company can easily anticipate changes, adapt to current situation and eliminate risk. CRM bring together all functional areas in company and improves communication between them. Company's goal should not be only satisfied customer but also satisfied employees and that is crucial part of business. When increasing team activity and effectivity of work, motivation and team spirit between employees spread widely. Final effect can be high retention rate of employees and corresponding commitment towards their job. (Wessling, 2003)

CRM is all about interaction.. Wessling (2003, 24) states that customer and company should have dynamic relationship. When purchasing company's goods, a person automatically becomes customer. It is remarkable for company from point of view as customer's lifetime value. There is a reason why person decides to become customer of certain company and there is a reason why he remains in this relationship. Both sides have duties towards the other. Both sides are requiring and demanding something from the other side (Wessling, 2003, 47). The customer-company relationship is all about reciprocity. Wessling (2003) argues about utility of relationship between customer and company which are defined by 3 factors: duration of relationship, number of customers and profitability of customers.

### **3.2 The CRM strategy through SWOT analysis**

Once company knows the magical number of NPS and also analysis the CRM activities, here comes the ultimate question: Why? Answer can be detailed analysis of attributes of company's product – SWOT analysis. (Wessling, 2003, 66)

## **4 SWOT ANALYSIS**

SWOT analysis is a useful technique for understanding strengths and weaknesses of the company as well as identifying opportunities which they can take advantage from and threats that company needs to count with. (Manktelow 2015) SWOT analysis is considered to be useful method when strategic planning. It is practical exercise when finding out starting position. Management of company should analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The goal is to be aware and also to take advantage of strengths as well as eliminate weaknesses. Next step is to analyze opportunities and possible threats. While company is actively benefiting from opportunities, it pays attention to avoidance of threats. Strengths and weaknesses are part of internal analysis of company, whereas opportunities and threats are part of external influence of world. (Wessling 2003,66)

### **4.1 Internal point of view**

When analyzing internal strengths and weaknesses, company management should ask employees for feedback. The most valuable opinions and experience have experienced employees who are working for company for a long period of time and especially on top positions. Younger employees and rookies can see new ways where to lead company. They can bring fresh ideas and unknown point of view. Technology is only as good as are educated people who use the technology, so company should ensure the constant education and requalification of their employees. (Wessling 2003,66)

### **4.2 External point of view**

Companies should be aware of activities of their competitors. Useful way how to keep up with competitor is benchmarking. It is absolutely vital for company to know what kind of services and at which price level are its competitors offering to customers. Quality of results depends on quality source of information. Besides payed surveys from professional agency, company can make their own survey and set the questions and level of objectivity on their own. On the other hand, own survey requires higher human resources and financial costs. Company can beat competitors on price-level or non-price level, meaning package, quality and added benefits. (Wessling, 2003, 68)

### **4.3 Weak signals**

These signals are all information which were not consolidated but everyone knows there is a problem in certain area. Sources of these information might be different, for example dialogues between colleagues, fair's feedbacks, newspapers, internet discussion or friend's opinion. Personnel should be aware of enrolling signals daily. The results may help top management to decide on changes for the future. (Wessling, 2003, 69)

## 5 CUSTOMER POLITICS

Customer politics divides customers into clusters. Client clusters determine types of customers. Each cluster is significant by specific feature. (Wessling 2003, 114)

### *Example of potential clusters*

Leisure time: job, family, friends, relax,

Demography: age, place of birth, education, income,

Values: religion, family, money, ecology,

Approaches: services, products, customer service,

Social situation: upper class, middle class, working class,

Needs: self-development, help, admiration, peace, safety

(Wessling 2003, 116)

Clusters help company to identify needs and behavior of clients. There is no need for expensive research. It is OK to collect the basic data that company already has from previous period of time. Company is no longer working with customer as an individual, but collect similar features of clients and work with them as a group. At first, it is possible to divide customers based on incomes – profitable and non-profitable, or based on significant features such as: (Wessling 2003, 120)

*Normal customers* are looking for essential services (no extras, limited amount of innovations). These customers do not require any special individual approach, so company can provide standardize service.

*Reliable customers* are looking for services which were proven in the past or recommended by friends. They do not need extras and they are not willing to pay more for that. They are looking for reliability and trust.

*Intelligent customers* are expecting new progressive services on highest level possible. They need perfect interaction with company and they are willing to be generous when paying services. Nice example of this type of customers might be shopping online.

*Tendentious customers* still want new products, services but they are not willing to spend more money on that. They do not need wide portfolio of products, they just need to keep up with trends and simply to be in (e.g. new models of iPhone).

“*Me too*” customers are distrustful towards new things. They rather wait till friends and family tried and see if it works. When they see the services are desired and trustworthy, they want it too. They prefer to buy products in sales.

*Exclusive super-customers* want only rare and expensive products and services. For example if they should buy a car, they would prefer higher price over lower price. When dealing with customer service, they prefer individual (VIP) approach with the newest innovations which are not available for just anybody.

*Special customers* are looking for services they do not vitally need, but they still need them. These might be services with low demand. They like to be informed and they are willing to pay to stay up-to-date.

“*Law*” customers would like to present how other companies and competitors are treating them in order to get some advantages. They like to demonstrate the supply of others. Offered services are compared to the others and they claim to have the same conditions as they would have at competitors. (Wessling 2003)

## 5.1 Loyalty of customers

For Wessling (2003, 117) is client (user) inseparable part of business. Loyalty, meaning fidelity, must be reversible. Customer has to behave fairly towards company as well as company towards customer. This approach requires fair play and sustainability. Both sides must work hand in hand to reach win-win situation. Only such relationship can last. Company needs to determine touch points with customer in order to eliminate threads and weaknesses. It is crucial to be at the right time at the right place with the right products or services, which would fit customer’s needs.

There is a big difference between value and price. It is evident that company needs to pay salaries to the employees, material for production, storage and many other things. But how to appreciate their own goods? Company sees the value of product or service differently than customer. Price is numeric designation of utility of certain good in order to satisfy customer’s need (Wessling 2003, 127). On the other hand, value includes something added for customer. It is connected to the emotions, traditions and personal approach of each customer.

## **6 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN BUSINESS**

Since 1980's became popular tendency of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). It consists of shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, municipalities, government and society as a whole. Every stakeholder participates differently on enterprise activity, but together they have relationship of reciprocity. Company can influence the level of satisfaction of every each group via its activities. Problem became when the outcome of company activities brings more harm than satisfaction (Ecological pollution, children's labour, discrimination, exploitation, frauds, robbery, usury etc.). (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 19)

Market research TNS Emnid in 2007 focused on preferences of customers. 1300 German respondents answered and 78% of them said they focus on correlation between price and quality. For 70% of them is crucial Goodwill, meaning good reputation. Half of respondent claimed to boycott certain products or services based on using children's labour or genetically modified sources, adherence to humane farming conditions, non-recyclable material etc. Also 44% of them would pay more money if product or service is thrifty towards environment. Term Corporate Social Responsibility has become popular since 1990's. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009)

CSR is a set of activities and also voluntary commitment of companies to behave within their activities responsibly to the environment and society. Companies with CRS are setting high ethical standards and seek for minimalization of negative impact of their business. Common thing in CSR activities is that they are not set by law and companies do them voluntarily and society perceives company more positively. Company is considered as desirable employer and trustworthy business partner. More and more valuable became fact, whether company develops region and country as such via its activities. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 48)

### **6.1 Features of CSR activities**

Universality, volunteering, active cooperation with stakeholders, commitment towards developing quality of life, focus on development and not only growth, choosing one of the fields. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 48)

*There are 3 fields where company can focus their CSR activities:*

- 1) Economical responsibility brings long-term prosperity of entrepreneurship in regions. Via that company can improve employment of people in region.
- 2) Environmental responsibility prevents quality of environment for wide public and rational usage of renewable and nonrenewable sources.
- 3) Social responsibility is related to activities which higher the standard of living in region. It also includes culture, sport and education. It also can be called 3P- People, Planet, Profit. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 48)

According to KPMG International Global Mining reporting Survey in 2006, 60% of production companies included into annual report CSR activities to demonstrate their effort towards positive impact on society, health and nature. In comparison with year 2003 it was 44% of industrial companies so the increasing tendency is obvious. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 49)

## **6.2 What CSR brings to the company?**

Business is not a charity, however, customer notice the difference between firm that care and firm that goes over dead bodies. Competitors with a lot of CSR activities get better reputation in media and therefore customers will give a preference to the firm. Company wants to be seen as socially responsible and to be first-choice for clients. Not only clients but also employees have stronger commitment towards what they do. Positive motivation among workers is vital aspect for sustainable growth. CSR activities includes many benefits for employees, for example sponsoring of sport events, cultural events (theatres, festivals, regional fests) or community work (planting trees, donating blood, energy saving) etc. To share and support company's inner culture makes the personnel proud and cohesive. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 61)

## **6.3 CSR activities and customers**

Trustworthy, credibility and reliability is the recipe for building a trust. Trust can happen only after own positive experience. CSR activities have essential effect on stakeholders from external side. Involvement of companies in CSR activities strongly influences customer preferences. It builds relationship between customer and company. It also helps to get high moral credibility to the external perception. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 75)

## 6.4 Focus on customer

Today's marketing represents business strategy focused on customer, to please his wishes and satisfy his needs. Customer is essence of marketing and also final indicator whether our strategies were correct. (Cibakova, Rozsa, Cibak 2009, 61 - 81)

*Development of marketing went through these stages:*

- Mass marketing
- Marketing of diverse products
- Targeted marketing
- Relationship marketing

Mass marketing was mostly used in 1960's. Companies offered standard product for low price. They had strong positioning and targeted on every single customer. Marketing of diverse products started when competition rose. Diversity of materials, colors, size and quality aimed to target specific customer. Targeted marketing came on stage in 1980's, when companies started to realize the necessity of division of customers into segments. Targeted marketing is useful when recognizing new opportunities on market and filling loopholes on market. Relationship marketing became popular in 1990's. It is also defined as art of "finding, catching and taking care of their customers". Strong and stable relationship between customer and company is one of the most crucial challenges. Long-term relationship is anticipation for increasing rentability and credibility. (Wessling 2003)

To get closer to the customer needs and become the most relevant choice, it is necessary to segment the market. In practice it means to divide customers based on their preferences and their reactions to certain stimulus. Different stimulus is for university student and different for pensioners.

Through segmentation company finds touch point where customer's needs match with company's offer. Based on this information company can make marketing mix which help firm to build better business strategy than their competitors. Customers looking for services are much more various and more unique than customers looking for goods. This assumption is based on individual perception of value of certain service. (Wessling 2003)



## 7 MARKETING MIX

Neil H. Borden, the president of American Marketing Association, came up with idea of marketing mix in 1953. It is a method of determination of business strategy and product portfolio. Marketing mix as we know today conceived E. Jerome McCarty and he claimed to divide it into 4P – Product, Price, Place and Promotion (Marketing Mix 2015).

*Product* is what customer buys and how he perceives the uniqueness, quality, brand, reliability, design, service of the certain product. If customer finds the product unattractive, unsatisfying, of poor quality, there is no advertisement which can fix it. Company should be ready to react to the market needs and shape their product according to current wishes. Winning strategy is to ask customer directly what is bothering them and find solution. Final product will be desirable.

*Price* is a level of customer willingness to buy concrete product. It also shows the financial politics of company. Price must be adequate. In 1976, Peter van Westendorp came up with technique called measuring price sensitivity. He proved that lowering cost too much makes customers suspicious. If price is too low, people might consider it as low-quality product. If price is too high, people might consider it as scarce commodity or luxurious. Every product carries its social status, for example the Ferrari car cannot cost 50 CZK as well as bread cannot cost 2500 CZK. In both cases nobody buys it.

*Place* means where can customer buy such a product and all the distributional ways from company to the customer. Product which company sells must be easily available at the right time and the right place. If company is not able to satisfy needs of customer in certain time or place, it makes bad reputation. Shorter the chain from company to customer is, better for the business. Business itself depends on environment and surroundings. Not only stores but also e-shops must be customized for the best user experience.

*Promotion* shows the ways of propagation of products. It does not necessarily mean only billboards, web page, leaflets, posters or advertisement in television. Promotion means whole marketing communication towards customer, meaning transport of information. Vital thing in promotion is consistency. Only consistent communication and unity make trust. The way how company speaks to the customers makes opinion on good or bad reputation, too. It depends for example on greetings in e-mail, choosing the right words into posters or simply friendly approach of staff. (Marketing Mix 2015)

## 8 VALUE FOR CUSTOMER

Theodor Levitt claimed that product should not be defined by producer but customer. Customer is looking for product which brings him the highest level of satisfaction. Only such products have the highest value for them. Maximizing value for customer is the key to successful business. Maximal value brings a product with low costs, adequate price and required satisfaction. (Vlček 2002, 9)

### 8.1 Customer value

Commercial success goes hand in hand with sustainable value for customer. Customer value became key term for market economy. It is also measurable. It can be counted as relation between level of satisfaction and all sources needed. Customer is trying to avoid the feeling of shortness. Their need is to get rid of them through some good. The process of satisfaction consists of feeling utility and level of saturation. Customer value is relative. Every single customer is different and requires different services. One service or product can be good enough for one customer and not satisfying for another. There are many factors in a game such as expectations, aspiration or financial situation. Every customer wants to get the highest utility for money he must have used.

(Vlček 2002, 12)

*According to Vlček, there are 2 bottlenecks for maximizing customer value:*

- 1) Undesirable, meaning too high or too low value for customer
- 2) The size of the purchasing power of the customer

The ultimate mission of companies is to provide their products and services to customers. Successful products and services are ones which found its own solvent customer willing to pay reciprocal acceptable price. Situation is being complicated for firms by the current trend of globalization. Customers have too many options to choose from. Customer is more demanding and expects higher standards. Faster and better products and services are a must. (Vlček 2002, 12-18)

Hypercompetitive environment on market is led by requirements of customers such as

- *Complex utility* – meaning offer of products and services with basic features but with added benefit when ordering, purchasing, serving, renovations, maintenance or repairs and recycling. Most desired are highly sophisticated products.
- *Customization* – adaption towards personal and specific needs. It is often determined by local market and shaped by individuals.
- *Speed* – Time is money and customer wants to save time as much as possible. Shortening delivery time is crucial when customer's priority is time over money.
- *Adaptability and flexibility* – ability to adapt to all kinds of customer's needs. Company should be prepared and react fast to possible changes of demand.
- *Agility* – represents effort and will for innovations as well as active influence and creation of customer's needs.
- *Perfection and reliability* – company must create good positioning on market and build good reputation of its brand. Honoring company's commitments and attraction of new customers are keys to success. (Vlček 2002, 20)

## 8.2 Value Culture

Value culture is relatively new notion describing approach, awareness and knowledge of factors which influence value. Company should be aware of all available methods and tools which can help value management rise. Such methods have the only uneasy goal – to increase the value for customer. This value should fit customer's opinions, attitude, life philosophy etc. Value culture could be described as set of areas and factors which creates atmosphere where dominant part is customer's value. (Vlček 2002)

*Among these areas and factors belong*

- *Identification with the principles and spirit of customer value* – management, all employees and all stakeholders should act based on customer's values. The ultimate goal is to offer utility which equals client's requirements. It is necessary to stay consistent and stick to the company's core.
- *Management style* – is a combination of strategic, tactical and operational point of view which helps company constant increasing of value for its clients. Inner and outer customers have different needs, therefore they require different products and

company is obligated to offer wide portfolio. Continuous building of firm's atmosphere incites creativity, better team work and innovations.

- *Top management* has the dominant role when setting the direction, development of culture and spreading the vision. Through maximizing value for customer strives for maximizing of shareholder value as well as all involved stakeholders.
- *Middle management* helps to develop value culture by ensuring ubiquitous focus on customer value. Results of company should be identical with goals and vision of company stated by top management.
- *First-line management* participates on spreading value culture into everyday activities. They ensure bringing values to inner and outer customers via coordinating and organizing activities. Their responsibility is to take care of quality delivery and optimizing satisfaction of stakeholders.
- *Managers of all levels* must support the idea of maximizing value for customers. Only consistent, reliable and responsible approach of all management levels can provide stable relationship with customers. (Vlček 2002, 20-25)
- *Human dynamics* - The core of value culture are positive, value oriented everyday activity called human dynamics. Widely use team work is nice example. It is vital base of successful organization which connects people together, set the directions, choose the attitude etc. Teams create culture of firm and represent themselves for internal stakeholders as well as for external ones. Team are said to be key to flexibility and narrows the distinction between management levels. All activities done in teams are aimed to higher added value for clients.
- *Inner customers*, meaning employees often need motives and motivation to reach positive human dynamics. Employer should ensure there is a space for self-development and self-realization for every each member of organization. Satisfaction of employees significantly influence team efficiency and contribute to a creative and collegial atmosphere.
- All these sectional elements lead to *effective communication* which is considered to be the most valuable feature. Team work helps to develop communication inside and outside the company. Effective communication is an essence for effective

achievement of the highest possible customer value. Such a communication is obvious sign of value culture.

- Another way to support human dynamics is to be *open-minded towards changes*. This approach is daily threatened by conservatism, natural resistance and fear of changes. All management levels should strive for elimination of following excuses for example: Defense of current situation, skepticism, alibism, resignation, isolation, hesitation etc.
- When *fighting with these negative reactions and prejudices*, it is vital to understand the purpose and goal of the change, therefore to get closer to the customer and higher the value of the firm.
- *Effective use of methods and tools* - Realization of projects and team work as such help to increase value for customers. Atmosphere of value culture expect involvement of practical application of tools and methods. It is set of restrictions and need to respect towards long term advice. (Vlček 2002)

*Key techniques for increasing customer value are:* Actively influence customer's wishes and needs, respect customer's needs, stick to methodology, evaluate your action steps, use reliable resources of information, evaluate your costs and find ways to save money, try to avoid generalization, discover and overcome obstacles, search for help of experts, benchmarking, create and innovate new things, stay independent, every problem is a challenge attitude, standardize your products and services, create stable and honorable relationships and do feasibility study of every project (Vlček 2002, 25-29).

When company follows these key techniques, it effectively generates philosophy of value based company and strengthens atmosphere of value culture. The existence of a mature culture of value not only fundamentally change the approach to maximizing value for the customer, but it is a testament to the perfect philosophical and methodological mastering all the instruments of the growth of this key market categories. (Vlček 2002, 31)

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 9 METHODOLOGY

Main objective of this bachelor thesis is to improve current passenger services of a company Student Agency. The process is as follows:

- Characteristics of a company Student Agency
- Description of business activities
- Analysis of customer satisfaction was processed via primary research based on questionnaire survey
- Questionnaire survey consists of 16 specific questions (15 quantitative and 1 qualitative questions)
- Answers will be evaluated according to the 4 identifying questions (demographic)
- Sample of respondents is 583
- Period of time when data were collected is from 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 until 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016
- All responses were submitted online
- For evaluation was used descriptive statistics
- Based on results was determined suggested improvement
- Survey was filled by Czech audience and then translated into English

## 10 STUDENT AGENCY – COMPANY PROFIL

Student Agency is the biggest travel agency in the Czech Republic, the biggest trader of flight tickets and bus tickets on Czech market but also biggest agency of language courses and working stays abroad. Its legal status is company with limited partnership. The title of company is not defining target group but it means long-life education and discovering new things. (Student Agency, 2015)

*The lines of business are*

- travel agency operations
- catering activities
- road motor transport
- production, trade and services not listed in Annexes 1 to 3 to the Trade Act

Relation between controlled entity (Student Agency k.s.) and other linked entities

RegioJet (CZ), a.s. - purchase and sale of services, provide a loan

RegioJet (SK), a.s. - purchase and sale of services

Orbix, s.r.o. (CZ) - purchase and sale of services, provide a loan

Orbix, s.r.o. (SK) purchase and sale of services in insignificant volumes

DPL real, s.r.o. (CZ) - purchase and sale of services

Student Agency, s.r.o. (SK)- purchase and sale of services

Branch offices are held in Praha, Brno, Bratislava, Plzeň, Karlovy Vary, České Budějovice, Hradec Králové, Olomouc, Ostrava, Bánská Bystrica, Košice and Zlín.

### 10.1 . History

Ing. Radim Vančura, the current CEO of Student Agency, became sole trader in Brno and started providing journeys around the Europe and the USA and also au pair programs in 1993. Company as such was established in 1996 – Student Agency Inc. It is broadening its services to providing language courses abroad and also working programs and bus services. In 1998 Student Agency became the biggest au pair agency in the world. The company also got a reward from international association IAPA. Big step forward was entering the Slovakia market and opening committee in Bratislava. The most noticeable expansion of company happened in 2000 when number of employees and financial



turnover increased more than 100%. That meant only one thing – to create top management and define hierarchy of company. Into portfolio of services were added flight tickets to the whole world. In 2003 main goal was to find loop-hole on market which were quality services for acceptable prices. (Student Agency, 2015)

The main idea came in 2003-2004 (2004 successfully started journey Brno – Praha) with national bus transportation – yellow buses of Student Agency Express. In next few year there was broadening of destination to the largest Czech cities (Pilsen, Liberec, Ostrava, and some foreign destinations e.g. Switzerland, Holland, Denmark). In 2006 it was Austria, Hungary, Germany and Italy. In 2007 there were opened local committees in Carlsbad, Olomouc and Jihlava. Yellow line from Carlsbad to Prague and from Zlín through Brno to Prague started. Other foreign destinations Norway and France were added.

In 2009 the company received permission to provide train services in the Czech Republic, which meant huge opportunity for Student Agency. Portal [www.dovolena.cz](http://www.dovolena.cz) started in 2010 when company decided to provide trips and vacations. It brought people in the Czech Republic the opportunity to choose from the widest range at the lowest prices on the market. Also on spring 2010 first yellow rail trains named RegioJet departed from Praha – Ostrava - Havířov. The company RegioJet is a subsidiary of Student Agency.



Figure 1: Map of ways of Student Agency buses and RegioJet trains

Their first rail trains are luxurious and attractive. Slovakian rails allowed RegioJet in 2012 the line Bratislava- Dunajská Streda – Komárno. Since 2010, go 20 new buses with system of board entertainment Fun&Relax. Nowadays they provide bus journeys to almost every country in Europe and flight tickets to almost every country in the world. In April 2016, news about renaming the company's buses was released. Through that company wants to align the brand and make the message clearer. Many customers were confused by the name Student Agency and they did not understand why they should use services addressed towards students. Therefore all Student Agency buses will be from now on under brand of RegioJet as well as the trains. (Student Agency, 2015)

## **10.2 - Philosophy of the company**

Due to close cooperation with flying companies, Student Agency wants to ensure to their customers the best prices on market. Brand of the company is aimed as synonym for luxury and safety. Their goal is to be the best in field and every product they sell with highest quality for acceptable price for wide public. Facts that customers are using their services all over again and those rewards they received in past years just prove satisfaction of stakeholders. Student agency tries hard to build strong brand and company on Czech market focusing on trustworthy reputation. (Student Agency, 2015)

## **10.3 - Portfolio**

Student Agency has rich portfolio including 3 types of travelling (bus, train, plane) and many additional services. Customers can buy flight tickets, bus tickets, Euro weekends, tours all around the world, cruises, travel packages, insurance, accommodation, renting a car, taxi service, renting buses, visa, language courses and study abroad, working and au pair stays, sport occasions, culture occasions. All services are available on company's website [www.studentagency.cz](http://www.studentagency.cz) where customers may shop and also the domain [www.dovolena.cz](http://www.dovolena.cz) is a portal where customers can find their perfect match for holiday. It is becoming more and more attractive according to the statistics. The selling of tours has increased about 18% between years 2012 and 2013. (Student Agency, 2015)

## 11 PRODUCT: BUS SERVICE

Journey of passenger can start even before leaving the house. There are two options how to use services of Student Agency.

### *A) Purchase in stores*

Customer can buy ticket in a store (branch office) of Student Agency in one of twelve offices in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. The officer responsible for preferable type of journey will help customer with choosing ideal option, place of departure and arrival, time, date of journey and preferable seats. Customer is leaving office with printed ticket and all required information.

### *B) Purchase online*

Customer can buy ticket online on company's website [www.studentagency.cz](http://www.studentagency.cz). in section bus tickets. People, who have club card can sign in their account and get some discount for the trip. The only disadvantage of this card is that it can only be used when paying online. Customer cannot ask for discount in the store. After signing in, customer can select his journey e.g. how many passengers are coming and also if they are children or senior or they can get discount with ISIC card. After optimizing number and type of passengers, customer can choose from offered times and dates. There is no need to worry about missing places for sitting. Every ticket includes its own place to sit and customers can choose preferable seats (window, aisle, front seat, rear seat). After the process comes reservation and payment.

### *Reservation and payment*

Reservation of journey online is possible only up to 30 minutes after order, otherwise the order is cancelled. Payment itself is provided via credit/debit card or in the branch offices until 30 minutes from purchase. In the end of purchase comes confirmation and authorization via e-mail address consists of useful data (code of the purchase, date, time, place of departure) from the purchase.

### *Departure & during journey*

Bus usually arrives at least 10 minutes before departure. Professional and kind employees help, advice and answer all customer's questions any time. Steward checks the tickets and advise where to find individual seats. The driver helps with luggage. Once everyone is on

the board, the journey itself starts with introduction. Steward speaks towards passengers via microphone and informs about following steps:

- Introduction of crew
- Kindly asking to fasten their seatbelts
- Informing about the duration of journey
- Offering snacks and beverages
- Playing a series or movie

During journey steward goes through the aisle and offers newspapers or magazines. He/she also delivers hot beverages such as coffee, tea or hot chocolate. There is also possibility to borrow headphones to watch a small television (sometimes built-in chair in front), sometimes clients share 4 televisions with other passengers) so passengers can listen to the movie or music of their taste.

#### *In the end of journey*

Stewards collect headphones, picks up trash and inform passengers, who continue in their journey when and where they can find the following train or bus. There is a possibility to leave feedback immediately. Feedback sheet can be found near magazine *Žlutý*, which includes every seat.

## 12 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

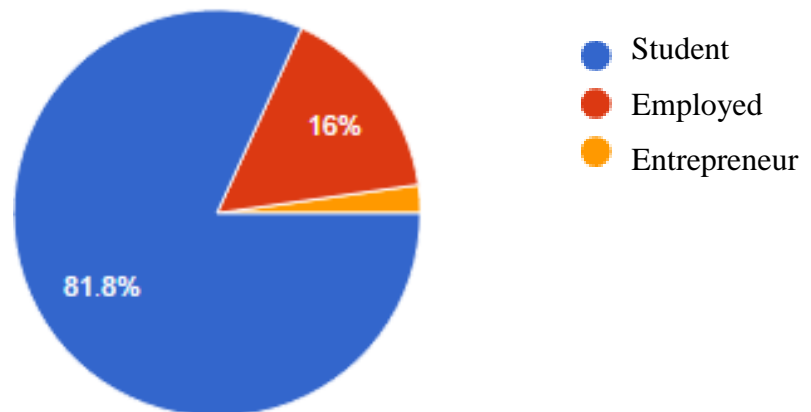
### 12.1 Description of sample of respondents

#### *Gender and status*

Sample of respondents during 31<sup>st</sup> January and 3<sup>rd</sup> March there was collected 583 responses from all regions of the Czech Republic. Out of these 583 responses, 72,7% were women (424) and 27,3% were men (159). The response group was mainly made by students 81,8 % (477), employed people 16% (93) and self-employed people/entrepreneurs 2,2% (13).

#### *Social status*

It is pretty clear that almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  opinions and ideas in this bachelor thesis come from women's head. The fact that 81,8 % of respondents are students might be presumed that other students filling the survey are helpful due to their own bachelor theses. It is also caused by spreading via Facebook page and lots of students spend their leisure time on social networks.



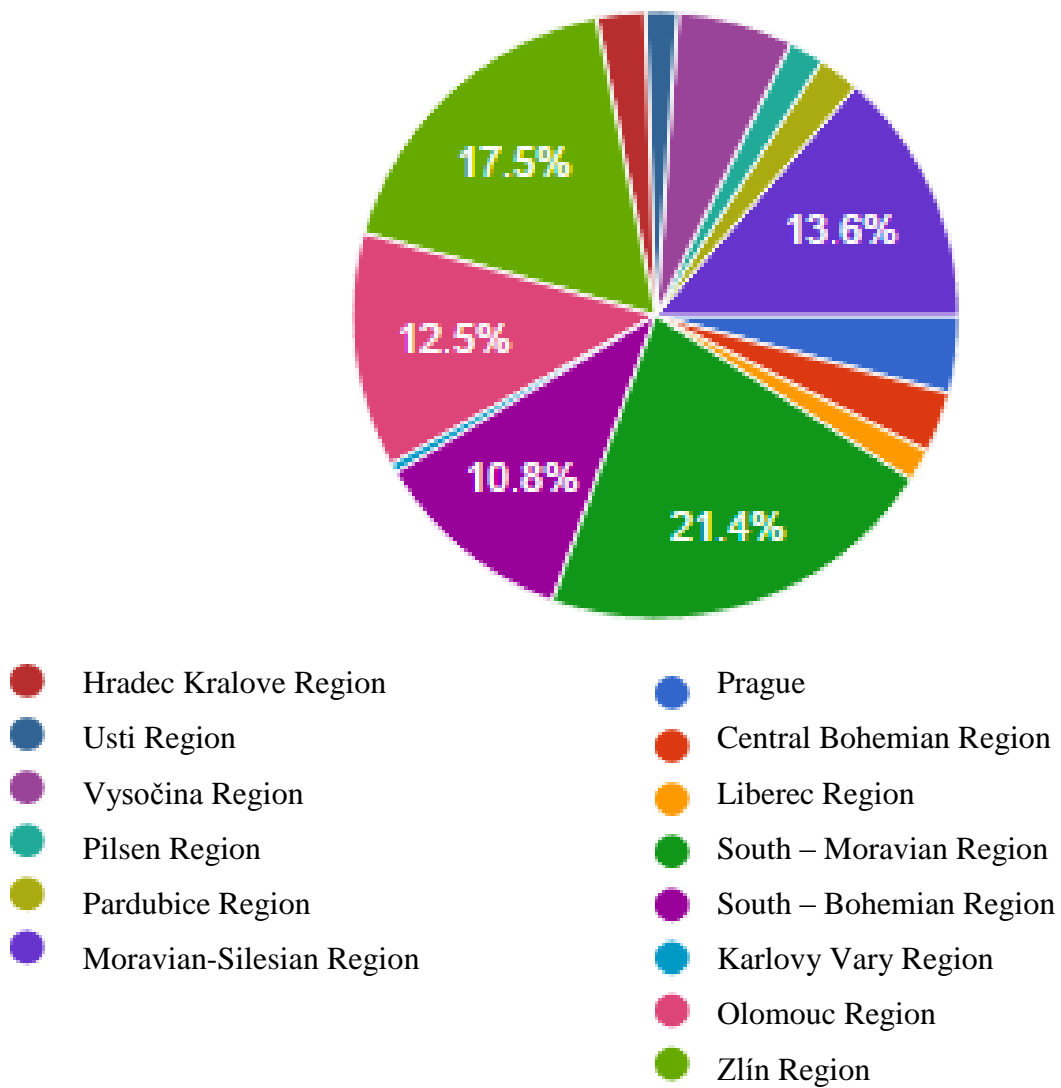
*Graph 1: Social status*

#### *Focus regions*

In following pages it is shown that most responses came from South Moravian region, Moravian-Silesian region and Zlín region. The ratio between men and women in these regions are following: Zlín region 1:2, Moravian-Silesian region 1:4, South Moravian region 1:3. Therefore, those will be focus regions for suggestions of improvement.

*Region*

Demographic indicators shows that most of responses comes from South-Moravian region 21,4% (125), Zlín region 17,5% (102), Moravian-Silesian region 13,6 (79), Olomouc region 12,5% (73), South - Bohemian region 10,8% (63), Vysočina region 6,2% (36), Prague 4,1% (24), Central Bohemian region 3,3% (19), Hradec Králové region 2,6% (16), Pardubice region 2,2% (13), Pilsen region 1,9% (11), Liberec and Ústí region both 1,7% (10), Karlovy Vary region 0,5% (3).

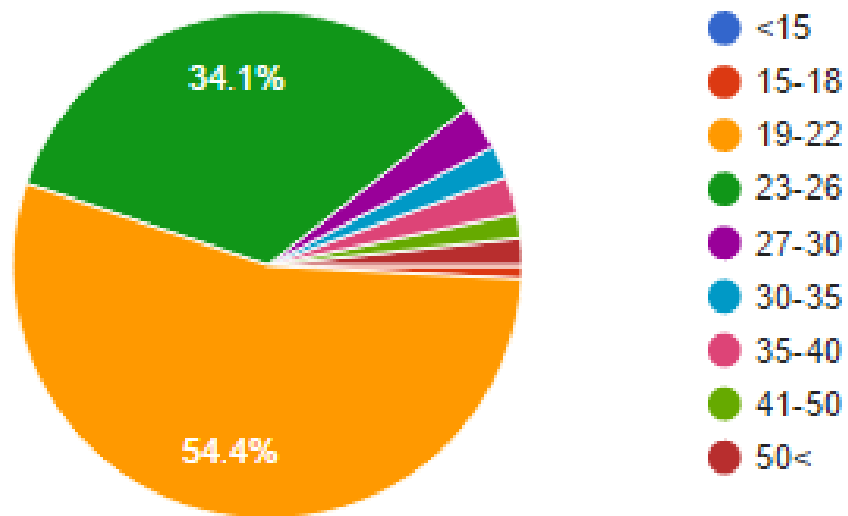


*Graph 2: Regions of respondents*

What can be observed is that most responses come from regions where the University students are. For the purpose of reaching goal of the bachelor thesis, there will be detailed data from 3 biggest respondent areas – South- Moravian region, Zlín region and Moravian-Silesian region.

#### Age

Age of responses was divided into clusters and results are: Under 15 - 0% (0), 15-18 years 0,9% (5), 19-22 years 54,4% (317), 23-26 years 34,1% (199), 27-30 year 2,9% (17), 30-35 year 2,1% (12), 35-40 years 2,4% (14), 41-40 years 1,5% (9), 50 years and more 1,7% (10).



*Graph 3: Age of respondents*

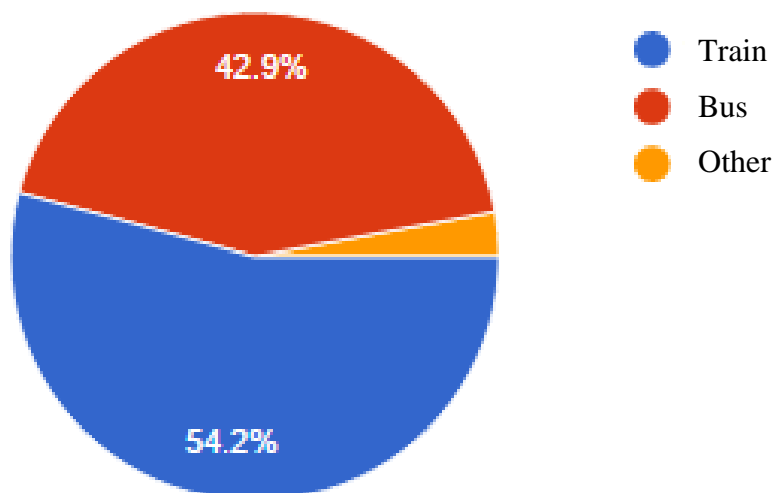
In this questionnaire it can be found opinions of two generations. Five people in the age of 15-18 years and also ten people aged 50< answered the same questions and gave the opinions on this issue. The most common answers come from 19-22 years people, perhaps students and also 23-26 years old people, who might be fresh graduates or newly employed young blood in companies. These people might be in common University students and they travel to their University cities and back home at least twice a week. In age 27-30 people usually already have families and their own car therefore they might use public transportation only occasionally or they can commute to work by train or bus on daily basis. People who signed in age 30-35, 35-40, 41-50 and 50< can be very similar to previous group and aim to use public transportation from same reasons.

## 12.2 Specific questions about transportation

First general question is about which kind of mass long-distance transportation passengers prefer to use the most on their travels. With this answer it is possible to predict the importance of bus transportation for long-distance journeys. 54,2% of the respondents answered that they travel the long-distance journey via trains. It can be caused by many factors such as number of stations, speed, comfort etc.

In the Czech Republic trains might be used as an easy transportation to neighboring countries such as Austria, Germany, Poland and Slovakia where international trains from the company České Dráhy go several times a day. In such international trains there is a possibility to buy hot beverages and little snack during the journey. However, there are some local or regional trains which stop in almost every small village. The Czech Republic is known for the wide train infrastructure (0,12 km/ km<sup>2</sup> area of country) with long history. (Tikman, Vachtl, 2010, 58)

On the other hand, 42,9 % of respondents answered that bus is the first choice when travelling the long-distance journeys. This might be useful information for top management of company Student Agency. People might choose bus for many reasons, for example train does not go to their final destination, bus goes more often than train or it is cheaper. Passengers might face changing buses often when reaching final destination. Seventeen respondents (2,7%) claimed to use other way for public transportation.



Graph 4: Preferred type of vehicle for long-distance transportation



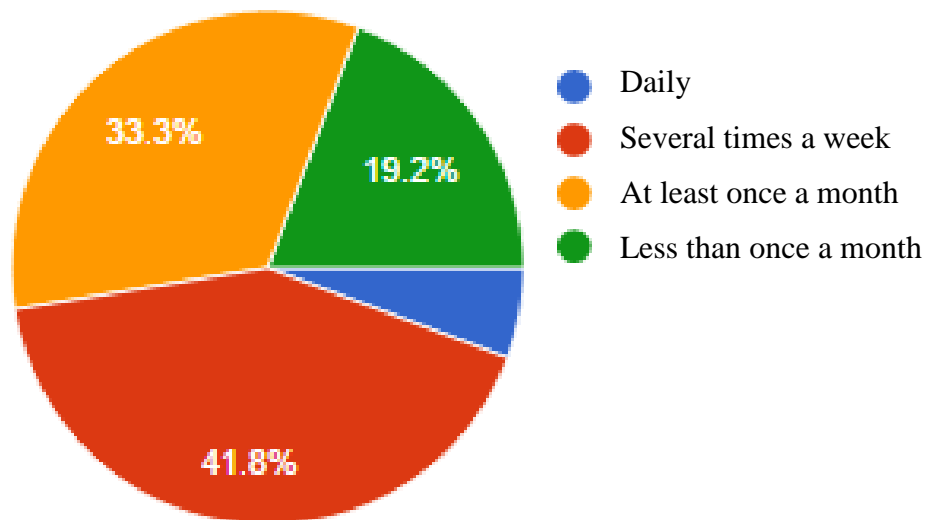
*Focus regions*

Respondents from South Moravia region aged 19-27 (37 people) claimed to prefer to travel by bus, which is minority, because 57 people aged 15-26 prefer traveling by train. The same situation occurs in Moravian-Silesian region, where 55 people aged 19-26 prefer train before bus (20). Contrariwise in Zlín region 50 people aged 15-26 answered they chose commuting by bus rather than train.

*Frequency*

When answering how often respondents use this particular type of transportation, their answers are following. Out of 583 people, 41,8% of respondents answered several times a week, which means they commute to their jobs or schools, but not every day. Second common answer is 33,3%, which is exactly one third of respondents argue to use public transportation for long-distance journey at least once a month.

Only 5,7 % (33) people who filled the survey use public transportation on daily basis. Nevertheless, there are some people who do not use this type of transportation almost at all. Exactly 19,2 % people answered that they use long-distance public transportation less than once in a month. This may cause that they use car or city transportation and they do not have to commute long distance to work or schools or anywhere else. Some people also can walk or ride bicycle.



Graph 5: Frequency of usage preferred type of vehicle for long-distance transportation

*Focus regions:*

In Moravian-Silesian region most respondents travel by train at least once a month (21) and 25 out of 79 travel long distance journeys several times a week. Traveling by bus is not common for respondents. Only thirteen people answered they travel by bus.

In South Moravian region buses are used more often. Fourteen people marked to travel several times a week by bus. Another fourteen travel by bus at least once a month. Also 21 respondents use bus services less than once a month. Trains in South Moravia region are used several times a week by 28 people.

In Zlín region 17 people claim to use train services less than once a month but also 16 people who travel by train several times a week. On the other hand 20 people use bus several times a week for long distance journeys and also 9 people commute daily. Twelve people in Zlín region use bus services less than once a month and the same amount of people use it at least once a month.

### **12.3 Decisive factors**

Usually there are more options how to travel from point A to point B. Customer must go through decision process. In the survey, respondents were asked to mark and sort essential factors which made them make a choice.

*Price*

Price seems to be crucial factor for Czech people. 527 out of 583 people claimed that price is decisive factor when choosing type of transportation. This information goes hand in hand with the fact that 81,8% respondents are students who might not have their own income and they are dependent on allowance from their relatives. Nevertheless, 44 people said that price is not vital feature. Only twelve people answered “cannot judge”.

*Focus regions:*

For 74 out of 79 respondents from Moravian-Silesian region is crucial decisive factor the price. This might be connected with employment rate of whole region. (8,5% information from 1.2.2016. (Piškořová, Habiňáková, 2016)

In Zlín region, 95% of respondents consider price as decisive factor and as well as in Moravian-Silesian region, because in 2015 the unemployment rate rose and 1.1.2016 was 6% for the whole region (Frolová, 2016). In South Moravian region is for 103 respondents price the main decisive factor.

*Distance of the train station/bus stop from their home*

Complication on the road might occur sooner than reaching the starting train station or bus stop. When people come from remote village in mountains or other difficult place to reach, their decisive factor can involve the distance of the train station/bus stop from their home. Results show that 397 respondents care about this issue. Whether they will use train or bus and pick certain services of a company is influenced by the fact how far do they have to travel to actually use their services. Overall, 166 people feel like this is the decisive factor. Twenty people answered “cannot judge”.

*Pleasant personnel*

More and more customer notice how personnel interact with them. More than a half (347) people consider pleasant personnel as a decisive factor when choosing type of transportation. Good experience with nice stewards or controllers might be the key strategy for improvement. There is a big probability that when these respondents meet unpleasant personnel, they might never use this service again. Company’s number of detractors might rise and it all leads to bad word-of-mouth. On the other hand 192 respondents claim that there are more relevant things and this factor is not as crucial as others. Forty-four people answered “cannot judge”.

*The number of transfers*

People in general do not like transfers. Transfers are time consuming and time is money. With heavy luggage, transfers can turn into nightmare. Sometimes transfer can take few minutes so customer is in time-pressure and situation is getting uncomfortable. Sometimes customer needs to wait for following train/bus/plane many hours. As the survey shows, that 518 people answered that number of transfers is crucial decisive factor for them. Whether passenger should go through 3 transfers or just 1 is deciding. Only 57 people marked that they do not mind number of transports and 8 people marked “cannot judge”.

*Focus regions*

In Moravian-Silesian region 94, 9% would like to save time and chose travel without or minimum transfers. In Zlín region it is 92 people out of 102 who care at most about this feature. Also 80% of South Moravian respondents appreciate their time and prefer traveling without transfer.

*Seat included*

This result is very balanced. 274 respondents say that seat included in their ticket is not relevant factor to decide which type of transportation to pick. 272 say that it is relevant for them to have certain place to sit. Especially in long-distance journeys, when customers have to stay in the aisle for many hours with their luggage, is not a pleasant situation. It is not rare that passengers have to pay extra money to have their own seat booked. Thirty-seven people marked this answer as “cannot judge”.

*Customer service (coffee for free, free Wi-Fi)*

These small things offered to customers can make huge difference. 355 people admit that they appreciate when they can get coffee or tea for free and also when they can shorten their time traveling by browsing the internet. 211 people say they do not decide on type of transportation based on whether they can get some extra customer service. For this type of people is major the journey itself. Seventeen people say that they “cannot judge”.

*Reference*

Word-of-mouth is considered to be one of the most powerful types of promotion. Companies should definitely care about what opinions and experience is spread among customers. Survey proves that 299 people care about previous experience of their relatives, colleagues and friends. On the other hand 238 of respondents understand that bad experience might be coincidence or exaggerated expectations from the side of customers. Forty – six respondents say that they “cannot judge”.

*Company size*

Companies can be established decades ago and have strong positioning on market. They could be well-known with good branding or just start-ups with brand new ideas. Out of 583 respondents, 503 answered that the size of company is absolutely not grand information when choosing type of long-distance transportation. There were few people who believe company size matters because of stability and reliability, but in this survey they were just 38 of them. Another thirty-eight people marked this answer as “cannot judge”.

*Facilities and technical capability of the transportation*

When travelling a long-distance journey customers requires as much comfort as possible. Nowadays it is inconceivable to sit in a bus or train on warm summer days without air conditions as well as without heating during winter. Customers also appreciate when there is a possibility to spend their travel time actively (reading, watching TV, playing games).

Besides the amusement, customers always care about their safety and they want the exact vehicle to be safe place drove by responsible drivers. 385 respondents consider facilities and technical capability of the transportation as a decisive factor. 147 people claim that it is not decisive factor for them. Fifty-one people answered this question as “cannot judge”.

#### *Punctuality*

Punctuality, meaning that when timetable says the train/bus goes exactly at that time, it also will. Delays are unpleasant and customers consider them irritating. Especially when they have to transfer from one vehicle to the other and they miss their track. As a prove of that, 511 people admit that being on time is an decisive factor when choosing a type of transportation. Only 52 people are quite alright with not following the timetable. Twenty people marked this answer as “cannot judge”.

#### *Focus regions*

Most people who pay attention to punctuality comes from Zlín region (88,2%) and it might be caused by absence of high ways and busy international rails. The second highest result from focus regions is Moravian-Silesian region (84,8%). Third fact might be surprising, because only 56,8% respondents from South Moravian cares the most about arriving on time. This might be cause of common delays on rails when traveling with international trains.

#### *Insurance*

Insurance might be useful thing when cancelling the journey or loosing luggage. When cancelling the journey, it usually depends on how long before journey does the customer need to cancel the trip. Some companies might not give customer money back e.g. week before the trip. 322 people answered that insurance is not relevant feature for them when making the decision. 181 respondents want to have a guarantee if something disturbing happens. Eighty people answered as “cannot judge”.

#### *Animal transportation*

Many people own pets and also need to travel long journeys. If the company does not allow transportation of pets, owners need to look at different possibilities. 94 respondents probably travel with their pets regularly because they claim this could be their decisive factor. Majority of people (411) do not mind the transport of animals. Seventy-nine respondents answered as “cannot judge”.

*Possibility of transporting oversized baggage (bikes, strollers)*

This condition might be vital for sport fans and families with little children. There is not always space for oversized baggage and if it is, usually passengers have to pay extra money. 385 respondents say this is not their case and they do not think it is vital for choosing type of transportation based on this possibility. 110 people believe that they need to have this possibility when going on long-distance journey. Eighty-eight people marked this answer as “cannot judge”.

*Air condition*

As it was mentioned before, air condition should be automatic equipment of every public vehicle but in reality it is not always that way. Some old trains or buses do not have such equipment. 331 people believe it is decisive factor for them. 222 respondents can imagine long-distance journey without air condition. Thirty people say they “cannot judge”.

*Discounts*

People choose carefully when spending and investing money. In the Czech Republic it is common to have club cards or discounts when being e.g. student or senior. 516 out of 583 respondents consider discount for their journey as decisive factor. Only 52 people do not share this opinion and they do not care about discounts. Fifteen respondents answered “cannot judge”.

*Focus regions*

This question is connected with first factor – price and as well as price, discounts are most valued at Moravian-Silesian region (93,6%). In Zlín region it is 88,2% and in South Moravian region it is 86,4%.

*Time consumption*

There is one commodity that people value but no one can buy and it is time. Time is the most valuable thing people have and they need to use it wisely. 531 people value their time and believe it is the decisive factor when choosing the type of long-distance transportation. 46 respondents say duration of their journey is not vital. Only six people marked “cannot judge”.

*Focus regions*

Absolute majority of respondents (96%) who care about time consumption of the journey come from South Moravian region. In all three focus regions, ratios are high. In Zlín region it is 93,1% and Moravian-Silesian region 92,4%.

*What would be the reasons you decided not to re-use transportation services again?*

Some situation might be so unpleasant for customers that they will never re-use the services of certain company again. Analysis of such factors can help companies to prevent from these situations.

- 1) 428 (73,4%) people would never use the transportation service if they find out there is no following transfer to their desired destination.
- 2) 330 (56,6%) respondents consider as worst situation when breaching of transport conditions e.g. claiming extra money for services, inadequate facilities etc.
- 3) 327 (56,1%) respondents would never use again services of certain company in case of losing luggage.
- 4) 267 (45,8%) people believes that increasing the price level is the reason not to use company's services again.
- 5) 235 (40,3%) respondents claim that unpleasant personnel leads to decision of changing service delivery.
- 6) 228 (39,1%) people would decide not to re-use service again in case of increasing time consumption.
- 7) 221 (37,9%) respondents answered they do not like over-crowded vehicle without no place to sit and that it could be the reason to choose other option.
- 8) 137 (23,5%) people bother the distance from their home to the train station/bus stop.
- 9) 133 (22,8%) respondents believes that the right reason not to use services of certain company is inadequate equipment of vehicle.
- 10) 109 (18,8%) people answered that the biggest problem is the delay.
- 11) 86 (14,8%) respondents would not use the services if they got the bad reference from relatives or friends.

Reasons might be various and there are many more. Major thing is to take advantage of being aware of them and be prepared to fix the troubles. Every transportation company should know their strengths as well as the weaknesses.

## 12.4 Qualitative question

*What comes to your mind when you hear words customer service?*

Qualitative questions are not easy to analyze because the answers might vary a lot. On the other hand, some **good connotations** were repeated frequently. For example the most common answer on this question was **Friendly Staff**. Customers believe that personnel supposed to be there for them and did not forget to mention the importance of smiling. In case of any inconveniences or whether they have questions about transfers or any kind of troubles, staff should be helpful anytime.

Second common answer was **Taking care of customer**. Customers choose the company for some reason and they expect and require attention. This point may involve the feeling of importance. Other answers with the same amount of respondents were **willingness, comfort** and **fast problem solving**. Some people mentioned concrete things such as **hot beverages, free Wi-Fi, newspapers and magazines** but also **food** at reasonable price level.

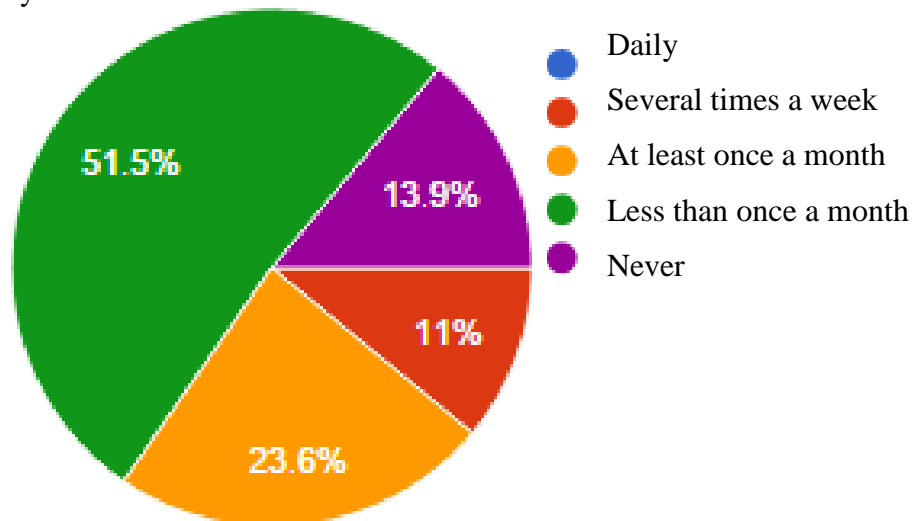
Some respondents also did not forget to mention they expect **something more**. Something they cannot get anywhere else e.g. **discount, extras**, surprises but also **fun** during the journey. Nevertheless, customers still want to be **treated fair and user friendly**. Seven people wrote **CRM** or working on relationship with customer, which supports the thesis of importance of CRM activities.. Thirteen people wrote exactly two words which we will focus on new pages and it is **Student Agency** and two people wrote the competitor Leo Express. As well as good connotations, few respondents have **bad connotations** with words customer service: Eight people wrote they **cannot imagine anything**, few people skipped this question by writing – and some wrote that this term **does not exist** in the Czech Republic.



### 13 QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPANY STUDENT AGENCY

*How often do you use Student Agency bus service?*

More than half of respondents (51,5%) say they use such bus service less than once a month, but they already used it. Also 23,6% people argue that they travel with Student Agency at least once a month. Only 11% of respondents answered they commute with Student Agency buses several times a week. However, there are still 13,9% people who filled the survey and never became customer of Student Agency bus service. Nobody answered daily. Daily



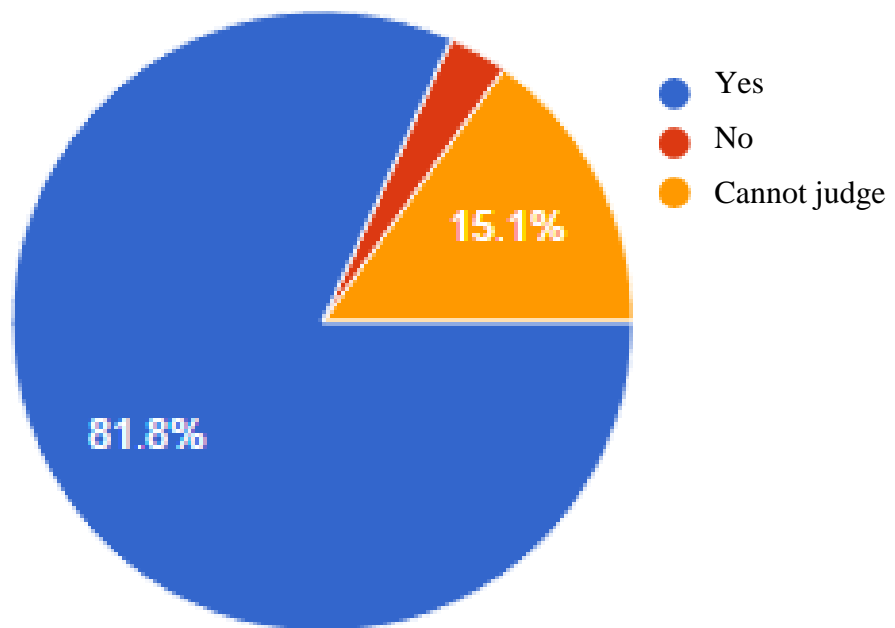
*Graph 6: Frequency of usage Student Agency bus services*

#### **Focus regions:**

Twenty-one people in South Moravian region claimed to never use services of Student Agency. In Moravian-Silesian region it is only 11 people and in Zlín it is 9 people. Interesting fact is that 9 people from each three regions respond that they used Student Agency bus services several times a week. On one hand, 25 people from South Moravian region, 18 people from Zlín region and 18 from Moravian-Silesian region answered they travel with buses of Student Agency company at least once a month. On the other hand 70 people in South Moravian region, 66 in Zlín region and 40 in Moravian-Silesian region use Student Agency bus services less than once a month.

*Have you been satisfied with services of company Student Agency?*

Majority of respondents (81,8%) claimed to be satisfied with their experience with such bus service. This indicator shows positive results and useful information for company. Positive opinion and satisfaction of customers is what every company should strive for. Still, there are eighteen people (3,1%) who were not satisfied with provided service and they can be possible thread when spreading awareness about Student Agency as such. People who marked “cannot judge” might be these ones who had never used service of company Student Agency nor they cannot decide whether they liked it or not.



*Graph 7: Satisfaction of respondents with provided bus services of a company Student Agency*

#### *Focus regions*

The best rate of satisfaction can be found in Zlín region (85,2%) but Moravian-Silesian region is right behind (84,8%). Less satisfied with services of Student Agency are customers from South Moravian region (78,4%).

*If you have marked “cannot judge or I haven’t used it” what is the reason?*

This question was optional and only 104 people answered. Most common answer (54,7%) was that Student Agency buses do not commute to the desired destination of customers. This might be relevant point for the company and space for improvement.

Company as such has 10 branch offices in the Czech Republic (Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Pilsen, Karlovy Vary, Ceske Budejovice, Hradec Kralove, Olomouc, Ostrava and Zlín) and buses stop at approximately 50 cities in the Czech Republic.

Second common answer (42,3%) was that people preferred other type of transportation. This might be information which is hard to work with, because it can be train or car or other bus service company. Third most common response was about the distance of a bus stop from their home. If customer is in time-pressure, there is higher chance he will choose the quickest and the most time-saving option for travelling. Three other options are not as significant as previous three. Eight people say they prefer buying tickets on place and purchase offline. Six people are not satisfied with services of a company Student Agency because of the price and only four people argue they have never heard about this company.

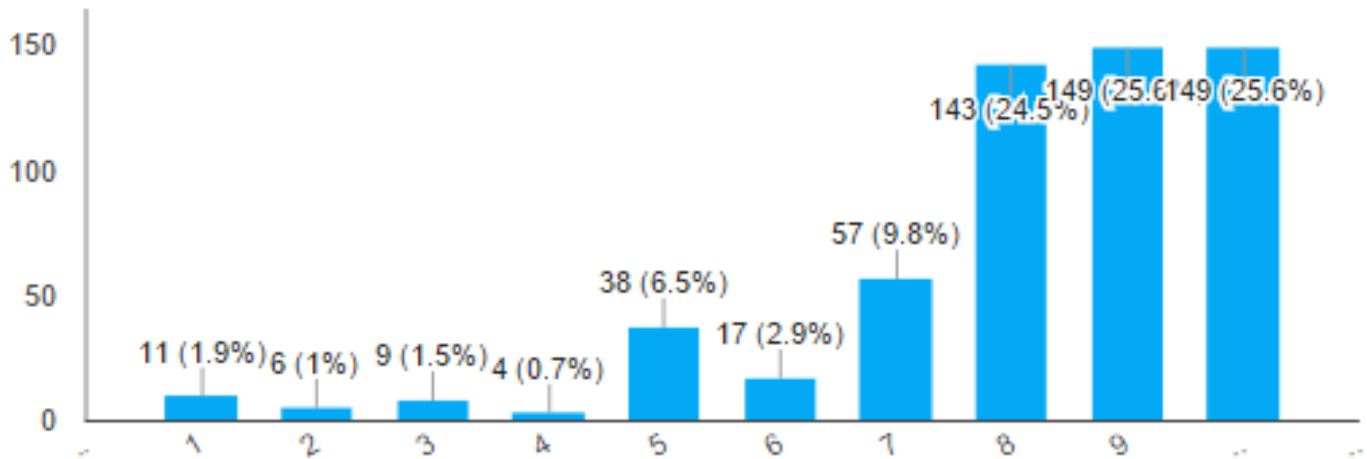
#### *Focus regions*

The most common answer was that Student Agency buses do not commute to the desired destination of customers and with this statement agrees 11,2% of respondents from South Moravian region, 8,8% of respondents from Zlín region and 7,5% of respondents from Moravian-Silesian region. Second most common reason was that people prefer other type of transportation. 12,6% were from Moravian-Silesian region, 9,6% from South Moravian region but only 3,9% people from Zlín region claim this statement is the reason they did not used bus services of Student Agency. Third common response was about the distance of a bus stop from their home and 6,8% respondents from Zlín region, 6,4% from South Moravian region and only 1,2% people from Moravian-Silesian region answered this is their decisive factor.

*On scale from 1-10, how likely would you recommend services of a company Student Agency to your relatives or friends? (1- at least, 10 at most)*

Respondents should have answered how high NPS would they give to their relatives or friends. Nobody could use the option “cannot judge” so this graph shows opinions of people who had never use their services. It is nicely visible from the graph that NPS of Student Agency would be 8 and higher. It means customers are truly satisfied with provided services and they also spread a good experience among others which helps branding and positioning of a company.

Number of people who marked 0-5 is not significant and does not represent a huge threat. However, few people with NPS 5-7 were not that satisfied and stay in a neutral zone. They are not terribly unsatisfied but also not very happy so they would help to build the brand.



Graph 8: NPS of Student Agency



Figure 2: Net Promoter Score

*Focus regions*

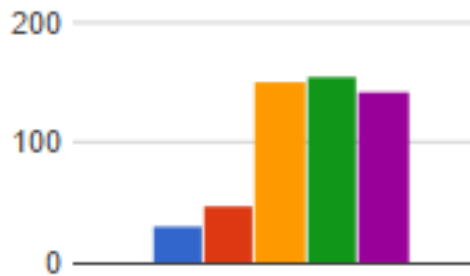
The best NPS from all three focus regions is from Zlín region. Outstanding result is that 25 out of 102 respondents from Zlín region marked NPS rate 10, which is highest rate possible. Zlín region has 49 promoters (NPS 9 or 10) out of 102 responses. Also 30 people marked 8 and nine people marked 9, which mean that customers were satisfied with services. Only 14 people marked from 0-6 which means they are detractors. In South Moravian region it is 63 promoters (NPS 9 or 10), 43 satisfied customers (NPS 7 or 8), and 19 detractors (NPS 0-6). In Moravian-Silesian region is 49% of respondents promoters (NPS 9 or 10), 28 people answered they are satisfied (NPS 7 or 8) but also 17,7% marked recommendation of bus services of Student Agency NPS 0-6.

On a scale of 1-5, how do you value the services provided by the company Student Agency (1 - at least, 5 – at most)

When travelling with yellow student agency bus line, there many services included. Respondents should give a value to each of them so they survey will show what do they appreciate the most.

*Foreign lines*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

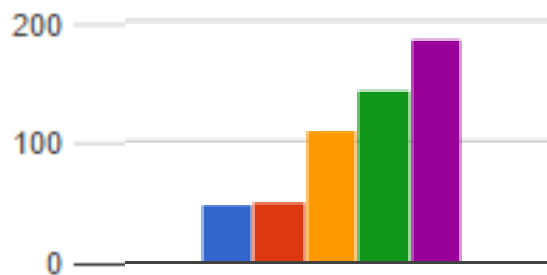


Graph 9: Foreign lines

What can be observed is that majority of people appreciates the option to travel with Student Agency bus abroad. For 80 people it is not relevant service which they would value.

*Discounts with club card*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

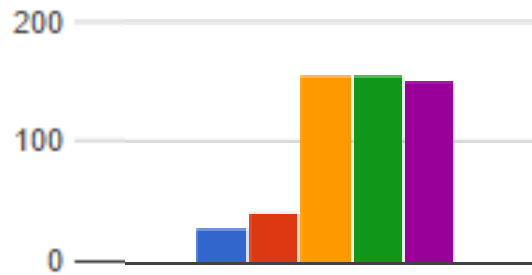


Graph 10: Discounts with club card

Discounts might be pleasant bonus when traveling. Based on results of the survey, respondent value them a lot. More than half of respondents marked 4 or 5. Student Agency club card is available for anybody and it is for free. The only condition is that customer needs to sign and pay online with it.

*Compensation for delays*

at least - ■ 1 - ■ 2 - ■ 3 - ■ 4 - ■ 5 - at most

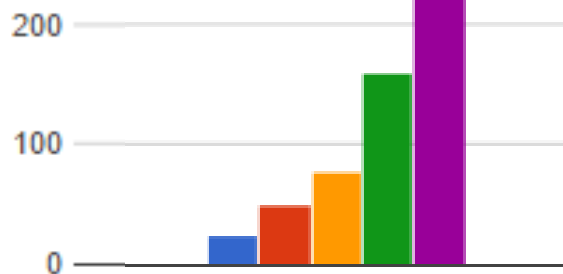


*Graph 11: compensation for delays*

Delays are irritating and disturbing for everyone. Passenger might value if for the time they spend waiting for vehicle they got some compensation. The most common answers are 3 and 4 which might mean it is not the main priority for them but 151 people claim they would truly appreciate the compensation for spending extra time traveling.

*Hot beverages during the journey*

at least - ■ 1 - ■ 2 - ■ 3 - ■ 4 - ■ 5 - at most

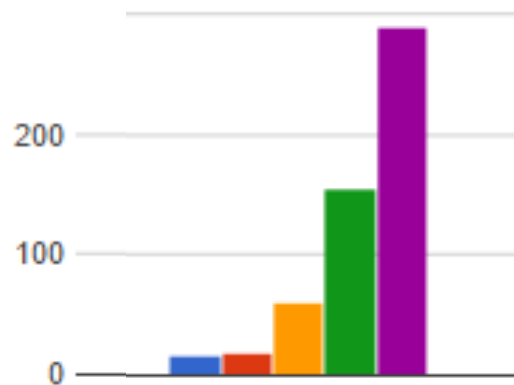


*Graph 12: Hot beverages during the journey*

In the Student Agency buses stewards always ask passenger if they want hot beverage such as tea, coffee or hot chocolate. For twenty-five people it is not valuable service at all because they marked 1. On the other hand 159 and 227 marked 4 and 5 which means they love when they can indulge themselves hot beverage during the journey.

*Choice of seats*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 13: choice of seats*

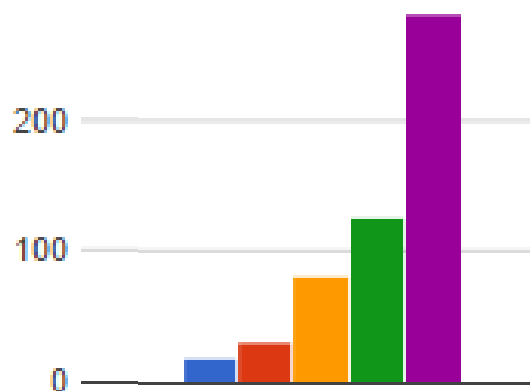
For some people the seat might be extremely vital because they get dizzy easily. Parents also appreciate when their children can observe the landscape so they can choose the window seat. Choice of seats prevents arguing and danger. Every passenger in the Student Agency bus has his own seat with seatbelt so no one has to stay during the ride. 290 respondents valued the choice of seat as highest.

*Focus regions*

More than half of Zlín region respondents (54,9%) valued 5 the opportunity of choosing the seat. Similar results are in other two regions. South Moravian (46,4%) and Moravian-Silesian region (48,1%).

*Free Wi-Fi*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 14: Free Wi-Fi*

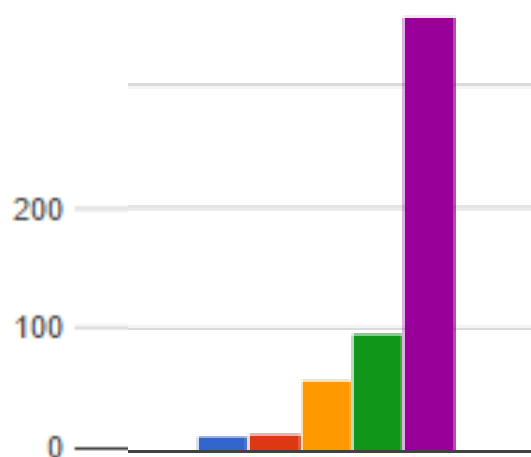
In modern times like these it is almost inconceivable to be offline for a long time, especially for youth. In Student Agency buses there is a possibility to connect to the Free Wi-Fi called ŽLUTÝ. More than half of respondents say they value free Wi-Fi the most. Of course, minority people can still go through the journey without internet connection.

*Focus regions:*

This service is most valued in South Moravian region (51,2%). Almost the same result is in Zlín region (48,0%) and Moravian-Silesian region (48,1%). These results emphasize the fact of modern time and the desire for being online and accessible to anyone anywhere as much as possible.

*Purchase online*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 15: Purchase online*

This service was valued by the most people (357) with mark 5. In 2016, people and especially youth are used to dealing with operations online. It is quick and comfortable with almost no effort. Since 81,8% of respondent are students, it is understandable they prefer purchasing online.

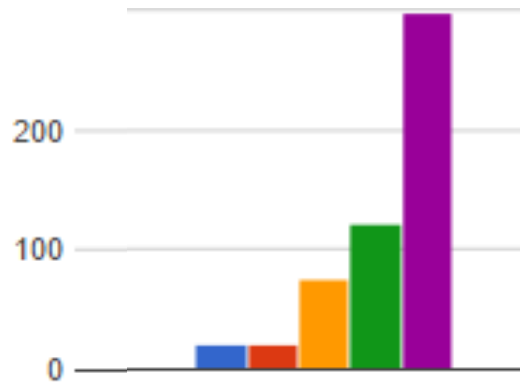
*Focus regions:*

This answer is connected with previous fact of appreciation of free Wi-Fi connection. The fact of people being online supports the statement of appreciation purchases online. In South Moravian region, 64,8% of respondents valued purchases online the most. In case of Zlín region, it is 59,8% and in Moravian-Silesian region it is 60,7%.



*Seat included*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 16: seat included*

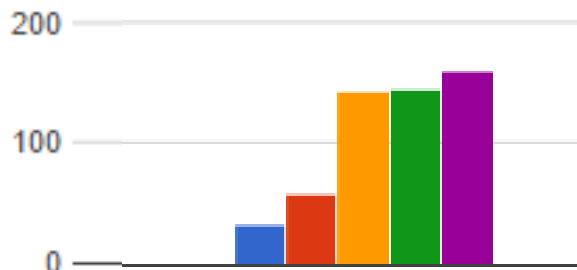
In some cases if passenger wants to take particular seat, he has to pay for it. In case of Student Agency buses, the seat is included. As well as picking up the right one and have it pre – reserved, people also value to have it for free.

*Focus regions*

This service is most valued in South Moravian region (54,4%) by its respondents. The second one is Zlín region (53,9%) and the third one in Moravian-Silesian region (49,3%). This result supports the fact of customers looking for comfort and safety due to their own seats and seatbelts.

*Food offer*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

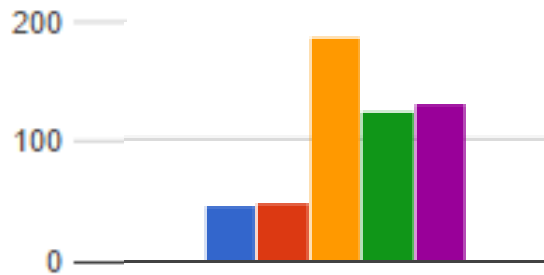


*Graph 17: food offer*

Especially during long-distance journey which may take hours of ride, it is required to have a possibility to buy at least little snack. Respondents are ambiguous about value of this service. Marks 3, 4 and 5 are quite similar.

*Waiting for connecting transfers*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

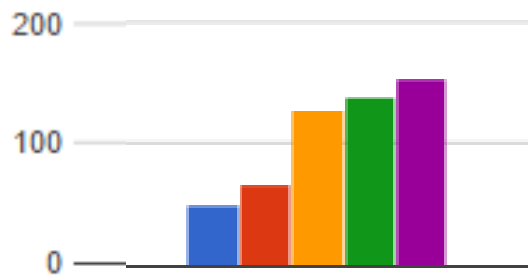


*Graph 18: Waiting for connecting transfers*

If passenger uses train services of RegioJet, which is subsidiary of Student Agency, and then continues the journey by bus, it is possible to wait few minutes for the transfer. Stewards communicate between each other and give information about current delays. Therefore, passengers do not miss their transfers and may continue in their tracks. People answered mostly 3, which is not high priority but also there are many 4 and 5 assume that customers value this possibility a lot. (e.g. traveling from Prague – Zlín, transfer in Olomouc – bus waits for the train).

*Journals, News, Magazines for free*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

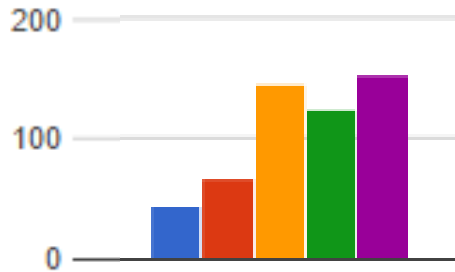


*Graph 19: Journals, News, Magazines for free*

Some people prefer to spend their time during journey reading. If they do not bring their own book or magazine, 153 people value 5 the opportunity to get some for free on a board. In Student Agency buses passengers can keep the prints.

*Seat belts*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

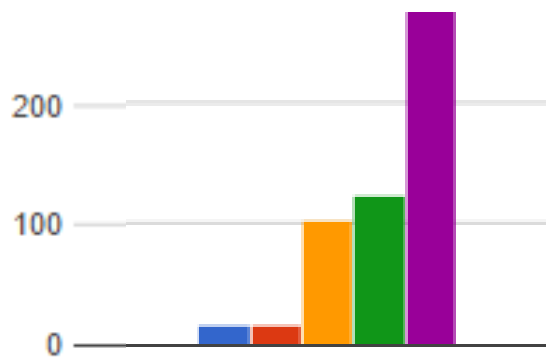


*Graph 20: seat belts*

Seat belts are obligatory when traveling with Student Agency buses. Stewards ask passengers before the journey to fasten their seat belts. Safety is in the first place and also company’s top one priority. Passengers unfortunately do not appreciate the option that much. Only 154 out of 583 respondents value them as 5, most common is 3 and also more than 100 respondents do not value them at all and marked 1 and 2.

*Transportation of luggage for free*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 21: transportation of luggage for free*

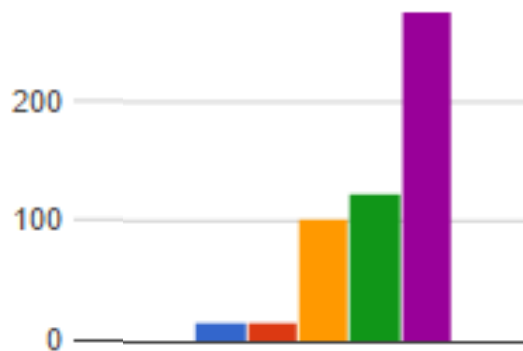
Sometimes when customers have big luggage (baggage, bicycle, strollers) they need to pay extra money. Also there are some restriction for weight and size of luggage. However, nothing like that is used when traveling by bus with Student Agency. Passenger’s luggage can be any size and any weight. Respondents have clear opinion about this service and 276 marked highest value 5.

*Focus regions*

This service is valued the most at South Moravian region by 45,6% of respondents, probably because they use this service most often when traveling long distance journeys. In Moravian-Silesian region it is 43,0% of respondents 5 and also 40,1% respondents from Zlín region.

*Headphones lending*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

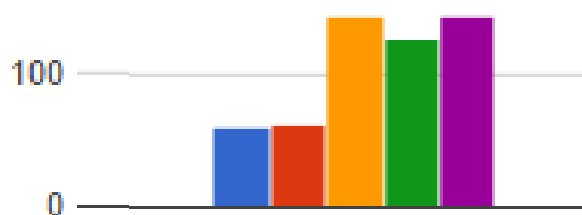


*Graph 22: headphones lending*

During the journey there is a possibility to watch movies or series via in-built television into seats or there are 2 televisions in bus for everyone on the board. Passengers do not want to be disturbed and therefore stewards ask if customers want to use disposable headphones so everyone can watch TV or listen to music on their own. Survey proves that people like their peace and quiet so they mark this service 3, 4 and 5 at most.

*Price of tickets*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



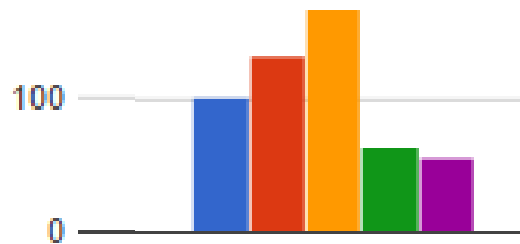
*Graph 23: price of tickets*

The goal of customer is to get the most benefit service for the least money. People should think economically when choosing company which provides transportation services and re-evaluate their expectations. Price of tickets is crucial condition and definitely decisive

factor. 213 respondents value the price of Student Agency bus tickets as 5. Also 189 people marked 4, which is considered as high appreciation.

*Feedback*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

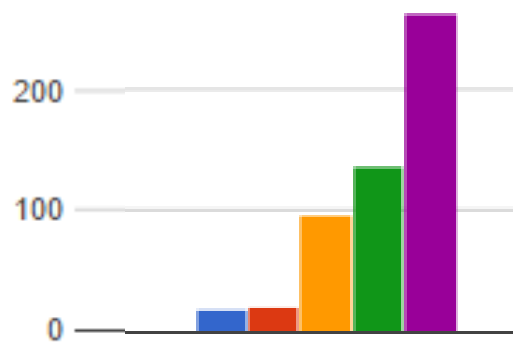


*Graph 24: feedback*

Feedback and communication with customer is vital for life of company. Finding out and satisfy customer’s needs is the reason why some companies are more successful than the others. Respondents might have other opinion or they have never used this service yet. 104 people answered value 1 and 135 marked 2, so they do not value the opportunity to give feedback right after the journey. It does not necessarily mean they are not satisfied, but also maybe they do not feel the need of sharing their experience.

*Reservation*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most



*Graph 25: reservation*

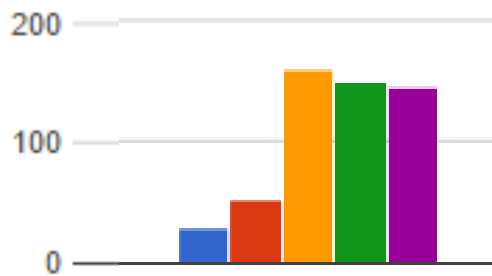
When buying a ticket online there is a possibility 30 minutes before the departure to cancel this reservation. In case of sickness or other inconvenience, this might be useful option. 263 respondents argue this is valuable service for them and marked 5.

*Focus regions*

Sometimes customers have to cancel their journey and therefore it is pleasant if there is possibility to get their money back. Almost half of respondents from Moravian-Silesian region (48,1%) value this service 5. In South Moravian region it is 43,2% and in Zlín it is 39,2%.

*Boarding points*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

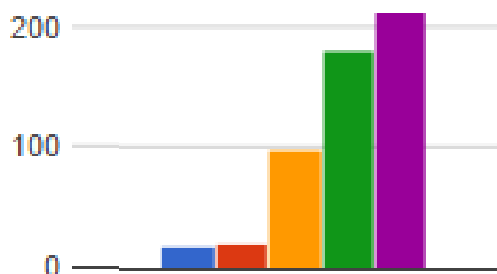


*Graph 26: boarding points*

In the Czech Republic, buses of Student Agency stop in more around 50 cities. Nevertheless, in the whole Czech Republic there are 6246 towns and villages. This means not everybody has the option to travel with Student Agency buses from their town and they would have to commute to boarding point and after that to the final destinations. The most common answer is 3, which might mean that people are willing to commute to the boarding point or they already live in cities where there are boarding points of this company. For those who marked 4 and 5 it is relevant point and service that they value the most.

*Keeping up with time schedule*

at least - ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - at most

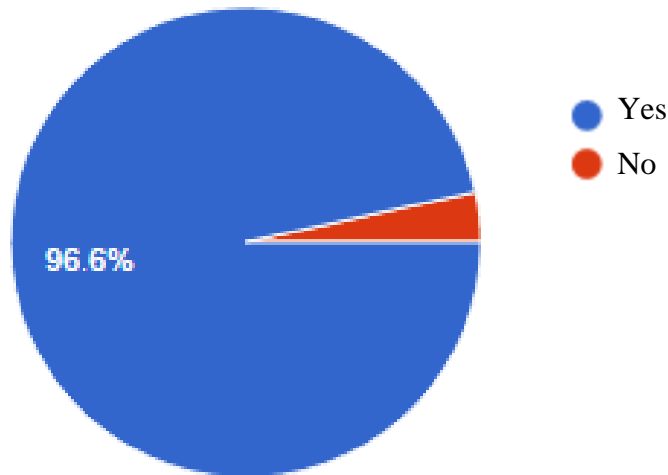


*Graph 27: keeping up with schedule*

As it was mentioned before, time is the most valuable commodity that humankind can use and passengers want to use it wisely. Therefore, they expect provided services on time and keeping up with time schedule. For 213 respondents is punctuality most valuable feature of service.

*Do you consider Student Agency as a company with good name?*

This question has clear answer and it is YES. Exactly 96,6% of all respondents believe that student Agency has good name, good positioning and it is an honorable company. Such a result might correlate with NPS and also with CRM activities. Just 3,4% probably have bad experience or heard something wrong about this company and their opinion is that Student Agency is not company with a good name.



*Graph 28: Opinion of respondents about good name of the company*

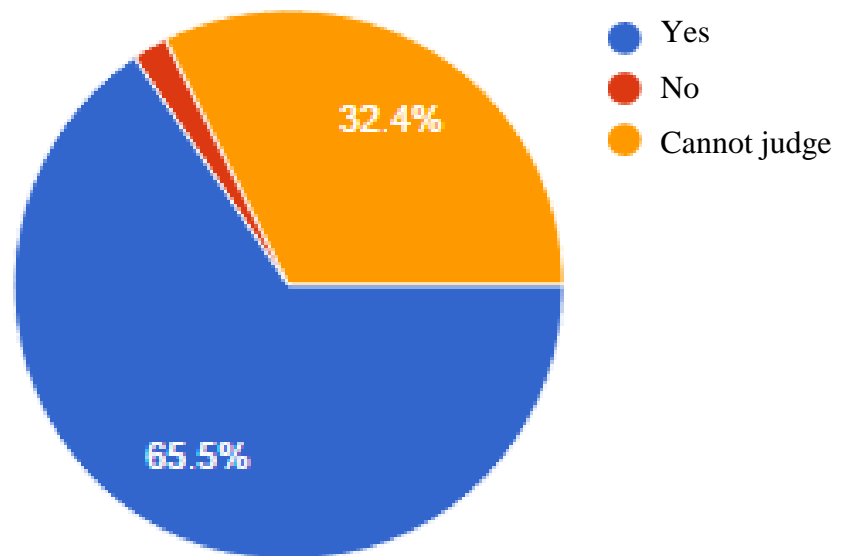
#### *Focus regions*

The best brand perception and good opinion about Student Agency is in Zlín region where 99% of respondents answered that Student Agency is a company with good name. Therefore only one man does not think so. The second best brand perception is in Moravian-Silesian region where 97,4% respondents believe that Student Agency is a company with good name. In this case, the worst perception has South Moravian region with 96% of respondents who claimed Student Agency is a company with good name.

*Do you value if the company pays attention to CSR activities (Corporate Social Responsibility - A charity run for cancer, environmental action)*

This question might be surprising but in environment where are many industrial companies and if they would care only about the profit and not the well-being of humankind, it would not take a long time to show off. Companies with CSR activities are more valued by customers than careless corporates. The result shows that almost one third of respondents cannot judge whether they value the CSR activities and maybe because they do not even know exactly company's activities in details.

Only 2, 1% answered no and they probably do not care about well-being of others and impacts of company's activities. Fortunately, 65, 5% agree it is essential for company to be social responsible and care about sustainability of men.



*Graph 29: Opinion of respondents about appreciation of CSR activities*

#### *Focus regions*

For sustainable growth and overall wellbeing of humankind there is necessity of CRS activities of companies. Respondents (64, 7%) from Zlín region believe it is vital for companies to pay attention to sustainability of this planet and should compensate the damage of their activities. Right behind Zlín region is South Moravian egion with 64% of respondents claiming the same thing. In Moravian-Silesian region was only 62, 0% who believe these are grand activities for companies.



On the other hand, it is alarming that 37, 9% of respondent of Moravian-Silesian region do not care at all about this issue. In other two regions results do not cross 1/3 of respondents who claim they do not care. Interesting fact is that zero people in Moravian-Silesian region answered they would not appreciate the effort of company in CRS activities, but they just said they do not care. In South Moravian region there were 4 people who marked they do not care at all about CRS activities of companies.

## 14 SUGGESTION FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT IN PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION OF COMPANY STUDENT AGENCY

Based on results of the survey which answered by 583 respondents, suggestions for improvement are following:

### 14.1 Strategies for the entire Czech Republic

**Spreading the net of stations and bus stops all around the Czech Republic as well as train rails with RegioJet** trains might be good idea for improvement. First of all, company should be aware of fact that trains and buses are almost equal and nearly half of respondents prefer bus transportation. This might be useful to know when standardizing the services. The suggestion is to stress the positive differences and focus on strong aspects of buses over trains and keep the standards. With this fact, it

**Frequency of traveling represents** next relevant information is. Respondents claim to travel long-distance journeys even several times a week and therefore they go through decision process several every time they buy a ticket. It depends on their customer experience, which vehicle they are about to use. Exactly 1/3 of respondents answered they go for long-distance journey at least once a month and these people can be involved more via e-mail, club cards, special season offers etc. Decisive factor such as price is vital.

**Benchmarking** should be used for this aspect, so they know the price of their competitors. Of course, it would be best situation to be the cheapest option available on market but also not so cheap that people would question the quality of service and it would endanger firm's operations. Management should be aware of financial situation of whole country and regions separately. The unemployment rate and job opportunities should be taken into consideration. If increasing price is unavoidable, it must be justified or compensated by extra service and of course, communicated clearly.

**Decreasing number of transfers** is a point for fast and effective traveling. In the survey, respondents answered that one of their decisive factors is number of transfer. For this, it would be useful to have in every region of the Czech Republic at least 1 store in the biggest city for people who do not like buying tickets online and also at least 3 bus stops in the biggest cities so they can travel inside the regions effectively. **Punctuality** is also considered to be irritating factor when traveling. Delays are unpleasant and company should be prepared to handle the whole situation with angry customers such as

**compensation for delays, gifts, sales in future** etc. The best option would be to avoid such situation via constant watch over traffic jams, car crashes, repairs on roads, find plan “B” road and **keep customers updated** so they know what is happening. If there is problem on a road for a long time, rather to change the schedule and count with it (e.g. this journey could take 2 hours of ride but with current situation).

**Spread the net of RegioJet trains** might help the time consumption. Time consumption is related to punctuality. In some cases the journey by bus can be so time consuming or have so many transfers that it does not worth the expenditures. In such situation it is better to use train and **spread the net of RegioJet trains** (e.g. Praha – Zlín). It would be also good idea to plan journeys of their buses in order to follow the competitors so customers have smooth transfers. The logistics should be loyal and **fair towards other transport companies**.

**Discounts must be simple and feasible**. Everyone should understand under what conditions they can have the discount such as students (primary school, high school, university) or seniors, mother with strollers, disabled people etc. Main thing is to stress out the possibility of discount and make it understandable and available for all. When customers are offered club card, they might be suspicious and do not want the commitment towards the company. On the other hand, via information such as e-mail, company can contact the customer and have active relationship. Management should find the line between active communication (once a month) and spamming (several times a week).

**Nice and pleasant personnel** make the experience of customers good or bad. Some respondents argue they would never use the services again if the personnel would be rude to them. With this problem can help HR department. They should develop some **rewards and recognitions system**, have a good care of their employees and pay attention to feedbacks. Stewards should smile all the time, be resilient towards stress, flexible when dealing with various situations and different types of people.

**Creating new bus stops** is a solution for the most common reasons why people do not use the service of Student Agency. It was the distance from their homes to the bus stops of Student Agency. This can be fixed by creating new bus stops to next cities in the Czech Republic. Good advice is to send **questionnaires with feedback** to people who had recently used the Student Agency services and evaluate what was good, what was bad and how do they perceived the journey. Another problem was that they prefer other type of

vehicle, such as train and that can be option of RegioJet trains. There is no problem with NPS of services of Student Agency. The crucial thing is to keep this level up during time. Competition noticed the positioning of this company and they are constantly trying to keep up with them (e.g. Leo Express and České Dráhy). It is recommended to look after them and do not hesitate to change thing constantly.

**Focus on strengths of services:** strong Wi-Fi connection, seats included, purchasing online, transport of luggage for free or reservation for free. Every part of their services was valued differently and is crucial for some people. Contrarily, customers are not used to using seat belts, which are used for their **safety**. This aspect could be stressed more by stewards so customers understood the purpose. Student Agency is considered to be a company with good brand. Regarding fact that this company is quite new in comparison to the České Dráhy or any local bus transportation, Student Agency is doing very well. The same problem as with high NPS is to keep it high and positive. For this, it would be good idea to support regional and national goals.

One of strategies can be **involving CSR activities into daily activities**. Namely it can be buying buses with hybrid motors or electro-motors so they **do not pollute** the environment. Plastic cups (coffee, tea, chocolate) should be **recycled** as well as news and magazines. With some extra money earned, company can invest into hospitals, some events for supporting people with cancer (e.g. Avon events) or building playgrounds for children. The biggest problem of Student Agency is that people do not use their services as frequently as other vehicles. The majority of respondents answered they use vehicles for long-distance journeys several times a week but more than ½ of respondents claim to use Student Agency bus services less than once a month. Also 14% of all respondents never used their services and company should work with this fact. Some reasons of this state are described in this analysis such as distance from bus stop to their home, buses do not go to their final destination or their prefer different type of transportation.

**Spreading net of rails, increasing number of final destinations and bus stops** can solve this excuse. Company can also involve the **opinion of public** and based on their choice open the new ways as it happened in past (Zlín - Brno). User experience should be ensured by high standards of bus equipment. The services could be widened about **new types of food and beverage**. Customer should enjoy the ride via new fun & relax system and spread awareness about good the brand. For the sustainable growth it is highly advised

to keep promises that company gave. **Treat the customer fairly**, do not hide any information nor discount. If something happens during journey (delay, loss of luggage, accident) always apologize and if possible pay financial compensation.

## 14.2 Strategies for Moravian-Silesian Region, Zlín Region, South

### Moravian region

In following sentences described as (M-S, Zlín and S-M).

#### 14.2.1 Moravian-Silesian Region

**Trains RegioJet** are the best choice for M-S region. Respondents from M-S region prefer to travel by train the long-distance journeys, which is good thing for Student Agency, because their trains RegioJet go from Ostrava hl.n. and Ostrava Svinov to whole the Czech Republic. Majority of respondents answered they travel by trains several times a week. Buses are not as popular as trains. Therefore it would be logical to **continue with RegioJet trains** on long-distance journeys (e.g. Ostrava – Praha) and shorter journeys such as Ostrava- Olomouc or Ostrava Zlín can be substituted with buses.

**Communication with customers via CRM** is a key to understanding increasing price level. Price for MS region respondents seems to be crucial condition when choosing the type of transportation. In consideration with the situation in region, all changes in price should be justified, increasing slowly and explained out loud. On the other hand, people in M-S region appreciate the most from all focus regions the discounts and club cards. Number of transfers is for 75 out of 79 major aspects. People love to save their time traveling for something else. In this case, Student Agency should plan journeys from Ostrava and surrounding with less transfer if possible.

**Being on time** is a must. In punctuality are respondents from MS region not as strict as their neighbors from S-M region and Zlín region. This is not recommended, it is just a point that people from other regions are much more into **being on time** and that maybe during some period in history MS region habitants got used to delays. Contrarily, they understand that it is time consuming and they are prepared to spend some hours traveling. When using Student Agency services, MS region respondents go by buses less than once a month and that is the same issue as in the whole Czech Republic. Eleven have never used their services. The most significant reason they stated is they prefer to use other type of

transportation. Trains in this region are more useful so the focus of Student Agency should be here on RegioJet trains.

**Communication and getting feedbacks** will help when dealing with satisfaction of customers with Student Agency services (64/79 was satisfied). M-S region has most people who marked NPS 5 (9) and also 16 who marked NPS 10. Company should be aware of some people who were not that satisfied and can become detractors, who spread bad opinion and wrong word of mouth among their friends and relatives. On the other hand, 77/79 respondents believe that Student Agency is a company with good name.

In M-S region nobody answered that they do not appreciate when company pays attention to CSR activities. This might be caused by the pollution situation in the whole region which is issue every year. People in MS region understand that companies should pay attention and take care about the environment around them. Alarming is that almost 1/3 of respondents claimed they do not care about the CSR activities. This can be solved on all levels. Parents, teachers should teach their children, as well as employer their employees, how to behave towards society, nature, natural resources and environment as such.

#### 14.2.2 Zlín Region

**Buses are more relevant for Zlín** region than trains. In Zlín region the situation is quite different than in MS region, because the majority of respondent prefer to travel the long-distance journeys by bus several times a week. The causes might be that the rail which does to Zlín is not used as frequently as in other cities. There are only 2 ways where to go from Zlín train station – Vizovice and Otrokovice. After these two stations, people need to change their vehicles and transfer. Rail situation does not allow the RegioJet trains to be involved. These **transfers** are connected with time consumption, which irritates customers. As for buses, the bus station is pretty busy and buses go to different villages all around the region. Maybe there are many stops on the way but they do not have to transfer. There is less chance to have delays when traveling less busy roads through villages.

**Be Careful when changing the price**, because price and discounts are in the interest of people in Zlín region as well as in MS region but not as significant. This can be connected with job offers and unemployment rates of region. As in MS region, it is

recommended to **be**. The majority respondents from Zlín region the bus services of Student Agency less than once a month and nine respondents never did.

This is a big **opportunity for Student Agency to spread the awareness about services and sell more tickets in this region**. Maybe to make campaign such as “Did you know that you can go to your desired destination with us?” Eighty-seven out of one hundred and two respondents answered they were satisfied with services they experienced. The most common reason why they did not used Student Agency services was it does not go to their desired destination and that might be caused by the fact people live in small villages around Zlín and they need to use local transportation.

NPS in Zlín region is the best out of this three regions, 89/102 respondents marked NPS 8 or higher. This becomes a responsibility of company to keep it high and also appreciate the loyal customers by some **gifts, sales or special offers**. In Zlín region is Student Agency considered to be company with good name and 101/102 respondents confirm that. Every time company has strong positioning, the bigger challenge is to keep it that way. What could help are CSR activities. These are relevant for ½ respondents. What could be seen as problem is the same situation as MS region with people being careless about the corporate social responsibility.

### 14.2.3 South Moravian Region

In S-M region as well as in MS region are trains more popular and more used vehicle than buses. This can be caused by the fact that in this region go **international trains** EC and rj of a company České Dráhy to Wien and Budapest and Bratislava. This gives opportunity for inhabitants to **travel abroad** long distance journeys via trains and České Dráhy are the biggest competitor in this region. Respondents argue to commute by trains several times a week and second common answer was at least once a month. With this information it would be good to look at opportunities to

Company needs to feel necessity of **spreading rails of RegioJet train into South Moravian region**. The only way buses of Student Agency go is Brno-Praha, Brno-Kroměříž - Zlín, Brno- Velké Meziříčí, Brno-Olomouc, Brno- Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště and then international ways to Trenčín and Bratislava and other. Suggestion for improvement could be to make **new station in Břeclav**, which is significant traffic node.

**Number one priority of S-M region is time consumption of journey.** This may be the reason why people prefer train over buses. In S-M region there is high way D2 from Bratislava – Brno and also continues D1 from Brno – Praha, that means traffic jams and car crashes every day. In this region only 71/125 respondents claimed that **punctuality** is essential factor for them, which has connection with the delays of trains and frequent traffic jams on roads. Other priorities are not significant and are practically the same as in other two focus regions.

**New bus station in Břeclav or Hodonín** can be next anchors for undiscovered areas of South Moravian region. Student Agency bus services are also used less than once a month by respondents. On the other hand, this region has the highest number of people who had never used their services (21). For this, company should try to stress the strengths over other competitors such as price and comfort. People who never used their services argue that buses do not go to their final destinations and that the distance from their home to the Student Agency bus stop is too far away. This can be solved by establishing **new bus station in Břeclav**, which is close to Wien or **Hodonín**, which is very close to **Slovakia**. Respondents who actually used their services were 98/125 satisfied with their experience. NPS of SM region was high as well, 93/125 respondents marked NPS 8 or higher, which are all promoters who can spread the good name of company as 120/125 people think they already have. Good think about SM region is that 80/125 people **truly appreciate the CSR activities** of companies, which is the highest number from all three focus regions. Therefore, if Student Agency started with some **ecological events, used the lowest-pollution motors** and all in all tried to be as careful to environment as possible, people in SM would noticed.



## CONCLUSION

The objective of this bachelor thesis was to identify and analyze satisfaction of customers with services of a company Student Agency. For this, the survey was send online through social networks and also filled by 583 respondents. It was performed according to the methodology. Preferences, priorities and values were analyzed. Student Agency was found on a best way to become positively received company with many promoters, when it comes to NPS.

As for the results, customers evaluated their experience with provided services of Student Agency which they had in the past. Respondents also marked the priorities on scale from 1-5 and now can company work on developing and improving their product. Another part was dealing with finding space for improvement and its implementation. Student Agency is well known company, yet not as frequently used as it could be. Many customers claimed to prefer some type of transportation and also use it much more frequently by other provider than Student Agency. Regarding to that, Student Agency should put all effort into incorporation to decision process of their potential customers.

Moreover, this thesis also dealt with the question whether customer's needs and company's requirements meet. Based on responses of the survey, some improvements were suggested and strategies for the entire Czech Republic as well as for focus regions South Moravian, Moravian-Silesian and Zlín region. It was shown that company is ready to be a leader on transportation market but it needs to extend their site of action and involve more people.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
NPS	Net Promoter Score
CRM	Customer Relation Management
M-S	Moravian – Silesian Region
S-M	South Moravian Region

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Map of ways of Student Agency buses and RegioJet trains

Figure 2: Net Promoter Score

**LIST OF GRAPHS**

Graph 1: Social status

Graph 2: Regions of respondents

Graph 3: Age of respondents

Graph 4: Preferred type of vehicle for long-distance transportation

Graph 5: Frequency of usage preferred type of vehicle for long-distance transportation

Graph 6: Frequency of usage Student Agency bus services

Graph 7: Satisfaction of respondents with provided bus services of a company Student Agency

Graph 8: NPS of Student Agency

Graph 9: Foreign lines

Graph 10: Discounts with club card

Graph 11: Compensation for delays

Graph 12: Hot beverages during journey

Graph 13: Choice of seats

Graph 14: Free Wi-Fi

Graph 15: Purchase online

Graph 16: seat included

Graph 17: Food offer

Graph 18: Waiting for connecting transfers

Graph 19: Journals, news, magazines for free

Graph 20: Seat belts

Graph 21: Transport of luggage for free

Graph 22: Headphones lending

Graph 23: Price of tickets

Graph 24: Feedback

Graph 25: Reservation

Graph 26: Boarding points

Graph 27: Keeping up with schedule

Graph 28: Opinion of respondents about good name of the company

Graph 29: Opinion of respondents about appreciation of CSR activities

## APPENDIX - SURVEY

## Survey

Bachelor thesis - Student Agency & satisfaction of customers

What type of transportation do you prefer for a long-distance journey?

Train  
 Bus  
 Other : \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you use this type of transportation?

Daily  
 Several times a week  
 At least once a month  
 Less than once a month

Which of these decisive factor are crucial for you when choosing the type of transportation?

	Yes	No	Cannot judge
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distance from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pleasant personnel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of transfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seat included	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer service (coffee, Wi-Fi, newspaper)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive references	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size of company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Punctuality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Animal transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Transport of over-size luggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Air-condition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time consumption	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### What would make you never use the service again?

- Loss of luggage
- Delay
- Unpleasant personnel
- Increasing price
- Distance from home
- Overcrowded vehicle
- Bad condition of equipment
- Follow-up joints along the route
- Bad reference from relatives
- Violation of conditions of carriage
- Time consumption

#### What comes to your mind when saying Customer Service

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### How often do you use Student Agency bus service?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- At least once a month
- Less than once a month
- I have never used their services

#### Are satisfied with provided bus services of Student Agency?

- Yes
- No
- I have never used their services

If you answered, that you have never used services of Student Agency, why?

- I have never heard about this company
- Bus stop is far away from my home
- Price
- I prefer buying tickets in a store
- I prefer different type of transportation
- Buses do not go to my final destination

On a scale from 1-10, how likely would you recommend bus services of Student Agency? (1-at least, 10 - at most)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
at least	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	at most

On a scale from 1-5, how much do you appreciate the services provided by Student Agency?

	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign lines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensation when delays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hot beverage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Optional seat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wi-Fi connection for free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seat included	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Option to by a snack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waiting for following joints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspapers, magazines, journals for free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seat belts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transport of luggage for free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
headphones lending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
price of tickets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
immediate feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
reservation for free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
availability of starting points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
punctuality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you consider Student Agency as a company with good name?

- Yes
- No

Do you appreciate when company does CSR activities?

- Yes
- No
- I do not care

Where do you come from?

- Prague
- Central Bohemian Region
- South Bohemian Region
- Liberec Region
- Karlovy-Vary Region
- Vysočina Region
- South Moravian Region
- Ústí Region
- Zlín Region
- Olomouc Region
- Hradec-Králové Region
- Pardubice Region

- Moravian-Silesian Region
- Pilsen region

**How old are you?**

- >15
- 15-18
- 19-22
- 23-26
- 27-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-50
- 50<

**Are you?**

- Woman
- Man

**Are you?**

- Student
- Employee
- Entrepreneur

**SUBMIT**

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## **List of awards of company Student Agency**

Best flight tickets trader in Czech Republic according to TTG In 2006

Best bus journey provider in Czech Republic according to TTG In 2006

Best Entrepreneur 2005, according to Ernst&Young

Czech TOP 100 award: 5<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2006

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in South Moravian region, 2006

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in transportation category, 2006

Czech TOP 100 award: 4<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic in 2007

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in South Moravian region, 2007

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in transportation category, 2007

Best bus journey provider in Czech Republic according to TTG In 2007

SUPERBRAND of Czech Republic, 2007

Deloitte Technology Fast 50, 2007

Grand Prix in competition Internet Effectiveness Award

Best bus journey provider in Czech Republic according to TTG In 2008

Czech TOP 100 award: 5<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2008

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in South Moravian region, 2008

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in transportation category, 2008

Student Agency is priced as 3<sup>rd</sup> most valuable brand established after 1989

Czech TOP 100 award: 3<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2009

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in South Moravian region, 2009

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in transportation category, 2009

Czech TOP 100 award: 4<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2010

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in South Moravian region, 2010

Czech TOP 100 award: 1<sup>st</sup> place in transportation category, 2010

Czech TOP 100 award: 3<sup>rd</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2011

Czech TOP 100 award: 4<sup>th</sup> most admirable company in Czech Republic, 2012

Best trade partner IATA category, SKYTEAM award, 1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2013