STEP INTO THE PAST AT

LOUČEŇ CASTLE

**The experience of families with children from the specialized guided tours
and the characteristics of the tour concept**

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is in the field of cultural tourism in the Czech Republic and its offerings of specialized products/services for the segment of families with children. In particular, this study examines the concept of guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle and the experiences of the families as units, and the family members individually – children and adults. The research aims to provide insight into these under-researched topics in order to understand better the needs and perceptions of this segment, focusing not only on the point of view of adults, but also children, who have been dismissed by the academics.

The study adopts the qualitative approach in order to address fully the introduced aims and issues. Two methods of data collection - participant observations and semi-structured interviews, were conducted at the site of Loučeň castle, in order to provide a relevant set of data concerning the phenomena in question. The study is administrated mainly from the consumer perspective, focusing on their experiences and interactions; however, the point of view of the provider presented by Mrs Šrámková, the representative of the castle, is included in order to evaluate the functionality of the concept.

The research revealed that the edutaining concept of the tours, enhanced by other factors addressed in the analysis chapter, is appealing to its target market and may bring a good family experience for all the family members. However, it is more tailored to children, or the adults who want to feel like children again through the experience. In addition, the findings underline the role of this concept in the differentiation of Loučeň castle and strengthening its position in the tourism market.

This study recommends the adoption of a similar concept for guided tours at other cultural attractions, castles and chateaux in particular, which target families with children, making them more accessible for this particular segment. In the context of the Czech Republic, this might increase the attractiveness and visitation of the sites, establish a positive relation between children and cultural attractions visiting, and consequently maintain the solid tradition of visiting castles and chateaux.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my classmates Andreea Andries and Antje Forytta, who helped me choose the topic for my master thesis. Then, I would like to express my gratitude to my mother, who contributed to establishing a firm relation between tourism and me – travelling, visiting places, getting to know new people and culture; she planted a seed for my desire to explore the whole world.

In regards to the actual process of my thesis writing, I would like to thank Mrs Šrámková, the representative of Loučeň castle, who enabled me to conduct the research and, because of her point of view, gave me an important insight into the themes studied. Last but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor Mikael Oddershede for his help and guidance throughout the thesis writing period.

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1 Introduction

After transitioning to democracy and opening political boundaries, the Czech Republic became a popular destination for international tourism. Conversely, the Czech Republic's popularity for domestic tourism among Czechs had dropped given new possibilities for travelling (Vystoupil, et al. 2010). However, this decrease was only temporary, as domestic tourism started to be targeted by a successful promotional campaign, Kudy z nudy (www.kudyznudy.cz), launched in 2004 by the Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism (CzechTourism 2012). Hence, tourism for the Czech Republic, as well as other countries in the European Union, is considered as an important part of the economy (Vystoupil, et al. 2010). This is confirmed by the stable tourism ratio on the gross value added: around 2,7% in the last six years (CZSO 2014).

One of the main problems with tourism in the Czech Republic is the unbalanced distribution of the tourism demand, resulting in significant regional disparities in terms of visitation and income generated by tourism (Ašmerová, et al. 2010). This is especially the case with international tourism demand, as nearly 60% of its volume is concentrated in Prague (Vystoupil, et al. 2010). In contrast, domestic tourists make more trips to other regions. However, domestic tourists clearly prefer some regions to others based on expense, convenience, and amenities (Ašmerová, et al. 2010). Seckelmann (2002) identified the potential of domestic tourism as a driver for the sustainable regional development. Therefore, enhancing the domestic tourism is considered as a step in the right direction toward improving the financial state of the regions which suffer from lack of tourism.

The Czech Republic is well known for its rich history and the number of cultural heritage sites (Vystoupil, et al. 2010). The statistics (NIPOS 2014) clearly document that cultural tourism, especially visiting castles and chateaux, represents an important tourism type in the Czech Republic (Ašmerová, et al. 2010). There are nearly 40,000 cultural sites, including castles, chateaux, churches and other historical buildings, registered with the National Heritage Institute (ibid.). Visiting these attractions can not only be classified as cultural, but also as educational tourism (Hertzman, et al. 2008). The combination of these two tourism types has been called "edutainment", a term which has gained wide popularity within its short life (Balloffet, et al. 2014; Hertzman, et al. 2008). Edutainment can be understood as an approach which connects cultural and educational activities with entertainment aspects, often using modern technology to communicate knowledge, while at the same time amusing the

consumer (Balloffet, et al. 2014; Hertzman, et al. 2008; Isacsson & Gretzel 2011). Following this logic, it could be argued that cultural sites are not only attracting visitors to generate income for their preservation and maintenance (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009), but also to provide tourists with new knowledge, and in light of the modern trends, a good experience (Balloffet, et al. 2014; Hertzman, et al. 2008; McIntyre 2009).

The cultural attractions in the Czech Republic are often visited by families with children, which supports McIntyre's (2009:157) argument that cultural sites often provide for "*social outing visits with families or companions*". Furthermore, Carr (2006) and Wu, et al. (2010:706) agreed that "*families with children are a significant and fast-growing market segment for a wide range of leisure and cultural products*". The importance of this tourist segment was confirmed by Nickerson & Jurowski (2001), who stated that the leisure travels of families are likely to increase because parents have less time for children during the week and want to compensate it on weekends, national and school holidays, and while on vacation. Therefore, families with children represent an interesting segment for cultural site marketers to target (Cullingford 1995; Johns & Gyimóthy 2002). In light of this discussion, families with children were chosen as a main subject of this study.

Regarding the previous discussion about families, it is noteworthy that children in particular have been overlooked and underestimated as consumers for a long time (Carr 2006; Gram 2011). The scholars used to study families' holiday patterns, behaviours, and experiences mainly from the perspective of the parents (Carr 2006; Cullingford 1995; Gram 2005; Johns & Gyimóthy 2002). Thus, there is little known about the needs, wishes, or experiences of children as seen from their own point of view (Nickerson & Jurowski 2001). As such, this study aims to address this paucity and investigate children as they were labelled by Cullingford (1995:126), *"the tourists of the future"*. These future tourists are likely to base their adult decisions on the experiences acquired in their childhood (Nickerson & Jurowski 2001).

In has been asserted that families not only seek entertainment, but also education and togetherness during vacations (Gram 2005; Johns & Gyimóthy 2002). Attracting them to cultural sites has become quite a challenging task given the competitive nature and developments in the tourism industry, as well as societal changes (Morrison 2010; Weaver & Lawton 2010). Tourists have become more sophisticated and demanding; their needs, wishes, and expectations have changed reflecting the transition of the society (Morrison 2010). In

addition, cultural attractions not only compete with one another, but with all of the alternatives to cultural travel, such as cinemas, computer games, amusement parks and others (McIntyre 2009). Therefore, having a museum full of historical artefacts, or a beautiful castle with precious pieces of art and furniture, seems not to be sufficient enough for attracting visitors and succeeding on the market. Thus, the need for differentiation is more important than ever before (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009). Offering something different special may help a cultural site capture the attention of tourists and enable it to stand out from the vast amount of competing attractions.

The challenges mentioned in the previous paragraph may be overcome by offering and providing the visitor with a unique experience, creating a competitive advantage over the other actors in the market (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Tussyadiah 2013). Indeed, it seems that tourism is presently exclusively about creating, co-creating, selling, and delivering a good and memorable experience (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009; Ek, et al. 2008; Hertzman, et al. 2008; Mossberg 2007; Tussyadiah 2013). Moreover, a good experience is a powerful tool as it can create positive word of mouth, encourage participants to acquire memorabilia, and make them return to a location (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Tung & Ritchie 2011). The question then becomes, "who decides what a good experience is, the consumer (tourist) or the marketer (the designer of the experience)?" The marketer is limited in that he can only assume that the experience he provides is good (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009). As such, the consumer defines what constitutes a good experience. Therefore, it is important that the tourists' opinions about their experiences are researched. The resultant data can provide useful information not only for the academics but also for the marketers, enabling them to meet tourists' needs and desires.

This thesis is concerned with the following areas: domestic tourism, cultural tourism, families with children, and consumer experience. The case of Loučeň castle and its specialized product of guided tours targeted toward families with children was chosen as it fits well into the frame of interest designed for this study. Moreover, no literature concerning the description of such a guided tour and its aspects and aims, nor literature concerning a guided tour's effect on visitors and their experience has been found which one could describe as compelling.

Thus, the main aim of this study is to understand the concept of the specialized guided tours for children at Loučeň castle through marketers' and visitors' perspectives. This will be accomplished via examination of the point-of-view of the representative of the castle and the

experiences of the families with children participating in these tours. First, the guided tour itself will be scrutinized and characterized, as there is no definition in the existing academic literature. Furthermore, the aspects comprising this tour and co-creating the experience of the visitors will be revealed. Second, the actual experiences of the visitors will be studied with special emphasis placed on the perceptions of the children and adults, as well as the influences of particular aspects of the tour on their experiences. Consequently, the study aims to evaluate the functioning of these tours as they exist in the Czech Republic while also contributing to the existing academic literature in the tourism field.

1.1   Problem formulation and research questions

How are the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle perceived by its target market, and how can they be defined?

1. What are the characteristics of these specialized tours?
2. How are these tours experienced by the families with children?
3. What are the differences/similarities in the perceptions of children and adults?

I as a researcher wish to highlight at this point that much more could have been examined regarding this topic. However, due to the timeframe of completing this thesis and constrained resources, the focus of the study was narrowed down as presented. Suggestions for further research are given within the Conclusions chapter (see chapter 5.2).

First, the methodological considerations explaining the approach to this research, data collection and analysis are presented. Second, the theoretical background needed to address the problem formulation and research questions is outlined and discussed. Third, the analysis of collected data with respect to the theories and the focus of the project is provided. Finally, conclusions answering the research questions, and consequently, the problem formulation are given.

2 Methodology

The current chapter introduces the methodological considerations of this study. First, the paradigmatic stance of the research and its characteristics are delineated. Second, the research design addressing the qualitative approach in general and the methods applied for the data collection in particular are presented. Furthermore, this section contains a discussion about the limitations of the research. Third, the ethical issues are raised. Fourth, the quality criteria assuring the value of this study are assessed.

2.1 Philosophy of science

Philosophy of science is concerned with paradigms. A paradigm is explained by Guba & Lincoln (1989:80) *"as a basic set of beliefs, a set of assumptions we are willing to make, which serve as touchstones in guiding our activities"*. The research paradigm guides the researcher through the study, gives him answers on the essential questions of the inquiry and provides him with a powerful tool to justify the steps taken along the research process, and consequently, the findings (Bryman 2008; Guba 1990).

The academic literature offers many ways to classify paradigms (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979; Bryman 2008; Chua 1986; Guba 1990...). Considering the main concern of this study researching the concept and the experience from the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle, I as a researcher found the constructivist paradigm as the most suitable to address these under-researched topics, as it gives a leeway for development and revision of ideas. The ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations of this paradigm are characterized in the following subchapters. Prior to the discussion, it is noteworthy acknowledging that it becomes nearly impossible to strictly distinguish between constructivist's ontology and epistemology as these highly overlap in their nature (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Hence, their discussion entails the same basic points − the multiplicity of constructions, subjective perspectives and the influence of interactions.

2.1.1 Ontology

According to Guba (1990:18), ontology seeks to provide an answer on a simple question: "*What is the nature of 'reality'?*" Thus, it aims to reveal what the origin of the reality is (Guba & Lincoln 1989) and describe "*how things really are*" (Guba & Lincoln 1994:108). The scholars (Bryman 2008; Guba 1990; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Jonassen 1991) have assigned to constructivists a relativistic approach to ontology. Therefore, there is no such a thing as an ultimate truth or a single reality. On the contrary, an endless array of realities existing at the

same time may be encountered when guided by the constructivist paradigm. Jonassen (1991) claimed that all the constructions are real in their own frame and that no reality is better than the other one. That allows the constructions to exist parallel without negating one another. Therefore, the findings of this study can be considered as relevant as of any other study and provide a new perspective on the concept of specialized guided tours and the visitors' perception and experience.

The particular constructions are understood as inherently subjective, based on one's background and experience, and located in individual's mind (Guba 1990). In other words, the nature of every single construction is fully dependent on its holder, whose previous experience and background affect the behaviour, decision making process or experience in the present.

Following the previous discussion, it could be claimed that this study is not on a quest of finding a universal blueprint for designing the best concept for guided tours for families with children, nor it seeks to give a general description of visitors' experience. On the contrary, it aims to provide an insight to the studied issues at a specific site and for particular people. Thus, it seeks to uncover the characteristics of the concept of the tours at Loučeň castle, its perception and the nature of experience it facilitates to the visitors. Moreover, it aims to reveal some patterns in visitors' behaviour in order to contribute to the (non-)existing literature concerning this topic. However, if other visitors would have been included in the research, the collected data would likely not be identical. Hence, the results of this study are to be understood as an illustration of the situation at Loučeň castle which may serve as a source of information also for marketers of similar sites offering comparable products.

2.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is interested in the *"origin, nature, and limits of human knowledge"* (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:83). In other words, epistemology attempts to uncover where the knowledge sprouts from and reveal its boundaries. It is about the *"the relationship between knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)"* (Guba 1990:18). Constructivists adopt a subjective epistemology based on the relationships and interactions of the investigator and respondents, and their influence on the study (Guba 1989; Jonassen 1991).

Guba (1990), Guba & Lincoln (1994) and Jonassen (1991) agree that both, the researcher and the participant affect the research at all stages. Thus, it could be claimed that the constructions are influenced by different perspectives during and after the research, given the individual

characteristics of the researcher and participants. In relation to the stage of data interpretation, Jonassen (1991:11) argued that the results of a study might be different since "*learners can only interpret information in the context of their own experiences, and that what they interpret will, to some extent, be individualistic*". Therefore, this research might have given other results if conducted by another researcher who could have chosen different methods of data collection and participants, and would interpret the data on another basis. Nevertheless, this does not make it less valuable as it is still valid within its own frame, as argued within the Methodology section (see chapter 2.1.1 and 2.4).

In addition, Guba (1990:27) suggests the researcher fusing *"into a single entity"* with the participants of the research in order to reveal the constructions, which may be encountered only in their minds (Guba 1990; Jonassen 1991). However, unlocking individuals', and especially children's, worlds is a challenging task (Gram 2005; Nickerson & Jurowski 2001). Indeed, being an adult may be a limitation when researching children. Nevertheless, this can be overcome by an experienced researcher: I used to participate in guided tours at castles as a child and gained some experience from leisure time work dedicated to youngsters. Furthermore, having the same nationality, language and cultural background as the participants helped me when conducting the research and analysing the data. Hence, there was no language barrier in the interviews. Consequently, the same cultural background eased me approaching the participants and interacting with them. Furthermore, it lowered the possibility of the data misinterpretation. Moreover, my previous experience was useful when formulating the questions and contributed to a smoother flow of the interviews. Following the discussion about Guba's (1990) suggestion, I directly participated in the guided tours in order to understand and step into the world of the visitors. In regards to the children, I used different tactics during the interviews to motivate and engage them better into the dialogue. Therefore, I asked some additional questions to keep their attention.

2.1.3 Methodology

Guba & Lincoln (1994) argue that methodology cannot be simplified to the question of data collection methods. These are only techniques gaining "*specific meaning according to the methodology in which they are used*" (Silverman & Marvasti 2008:145). On the contrary, methodology is much more complex. It is concerned with *"methods, systems, and rules for the conduct of inquiry"* (Guba and Lincoln 1989:83); hence, it provides the researcher with instructions needed to find out the knowledge (Guba 1990). In other words, it shows the path which should be followed in order to obtain, analyse and interpret the data. According to

Guba & Lincoln, (1994), the constructivist methodology can be considered as a relative one, as it applies the hermeneutical/dialectical process.

The hermeneutical part of the process corresponds to the accurate interpretation of the collected data (Guba 1990). In other words, it requires the researcher to present the data without adjusting them to the needs of the study. In addition, a concept of 'hermeneutic circle' is implied in this step. The 'hermeneutic circle' is concerned with going back and forth through the particular stages of the research design, and modifying them in an on-going process of knowledge acquisition emerging along the process (Guba & Lincoln 1989).

The dialectical step is explained on the basis of a continuous process of contrasting previously presented constructions in order to obtain more advanced ones (Guba & Lincoln 1989). Constructivists believe that sophisticated constructions evolve from a process of interaction which may have different forms - between the researcher and the participant or among the participants themselves (Guba & Lincoln 1989). Both types of interaction were encountered when collecting data for this study, as group observations and interviews were conducted (see chapter 2.2).

In line with the above discussion, the collected data were interpreted as obtained, so in an unaltered form. For this reason and to enhance the trustworthiness of this study (see chapter 2.4), the data from the observations were written down to the field notes and the interviews were recorded. Moreover, in accordance with the function of the hermeneutical circle, the acquired data helped me narrow down the focus of the project, specify the research questions and improve the further stages of the research process. As the next step, the data from each method were "*brought into juxtaposition*" (Guba & Lincoln 1994:114). E.g.: The data collected during the particular observations were compared in order to reveal patterns/differences in visitors' behaviour, and reactions during the guided tour. This allowed me to identify the aspects influencing the experience of the tourists. Discrepancies between the data from the two methods were encountered when contrasting them. For instance, when some children denied that they were scared to enter the dark hallway with the ghost of the dog. However, during the observations it was detected that they were very reluctant to step into the dark.

Having characterized the paradigmatic stance adopted in this study, the focus is now given to the way the research was approached.

2.2 Qualitative research and data collection methods

This chapter introduces the nature of the research conducted in this study. It presents the methods used for the data collection, discusses the reasoning for their choice and acknowledges their advantages and limitations. Moreover, it characterizes the participants of the study. However, first a figure illustrating the research design is presented (see Figure 1), where the dashed lines represent the function of the hermeneutic circle (see chapter 2.1.3).
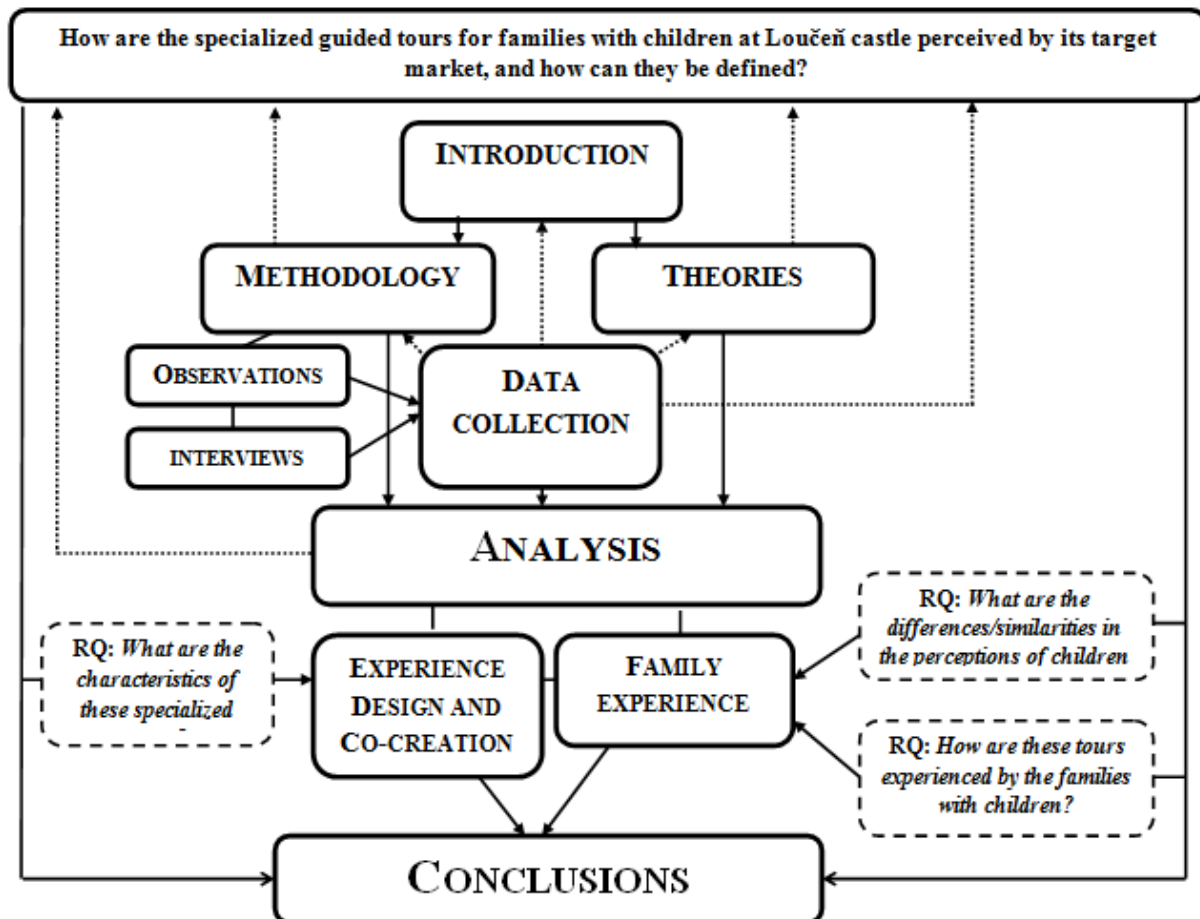
Figure 1 Research design (self created figure)

The main aim of the research, no matter if quantitative or qualitative, is producing "*new knowledge worth knowing*" (Kvale 1994:171). Having in mind the objectives of this study, its problem formulation and the research questions, the qualitative approach was chosen as the appropriate one to address them as it gives the researcher tools to uncover "*the uniquenesses of individual lives*" (Stake 1995:36) while studying them in natural settings. Thus, it can "*provide rich insight into human behavior*" (Guba & Lincoln 1994:106) from "*the perspective of those being studied*" (Bryman 2008:393). Therefore, one could argue that the opinions, impressions, stories, values, beliefs, feelings and so on, hidden in participants'

minds, as well as their meanings and significance in a given context can be revealed by the means of the qualitative study (Bryman 2008; Stake 1995). Hence, this approach may provide me with a valuable set of data concerning the concept of the specialized guided tours for families with children at the Loučeň castle and the acquired experience.

The qualitative research has been criticized for various reasons, Bryman (2008:391) sums up the main issues as follows: high subjectivity, difficulty in replication and generalization and lack of transparency. Based on the academic literature (Kvale 1994; Stake 1995), the qualitative approach is more likely to be subject to researcher's bias than the quantitative one. Indeed, Kvale (1994:155) acknowledges that "*bias in research cannot be completely avoided*", but he continues that it is usually unintentional and can be minimized by using certain techniques such as triangulation. However, having adopted the constructivist paradigm, the bias is not considered as an important issue for this study. Moreover, subjectivity in the qualitative research may be perceived "*as an essential element of understanding*" (Stake 1995:45) contributing to revealing information about human actions in a certain context. Therefore, it does not necessarily lower the level of trustworthiness of the research, it can enhance it instead.

The process of overcoming the other limitations posed by Bryman (2008) is presented in the chapter Qualitative criteria (see chapter 2.4). Stake (1995:45) adds that qualitative research usually takes a long time, which implies slow contributions and high costs; and has significant ethical risks (see chapter 2.3). The time consumption of the research is undoubted, but may bring insight into the researched phenomena and so more accurate data and findings. E.g.: The qualitative approach facilitated me the examination of individual's experiences as the participants of the study could comment on it freely and in detail.

As mentioned above, the triangulation is suggested to be used for the purpose of enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Bryman 2008; Guion, et al. 2011). It may be explained as *"analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives"* (Guion, et al. 2011: 1) in order to cross-check the findings (Bryman 2008). One can encounter five types of triangulation which might be used within a single study. These are the following: data, investigator, theory, methodological and environmental triangulation (Guion, et al. 2011:1). Nevertheless, Bryman (2008) argues that the majority of papers uses only the data and methodological triangulation as these are the easiest to apply. Thus, they were adopted in this research. The data for the study were gathered from different sources, namely the visitors of

Loučeň castle, but also from the representative of the castle. Furthermore, two methods of data collection were employed with intention to double check the data. In addition, theory triangulation was used when constructing the theoretical framework for the study after reviewing an extent body of academic literature with various standpoints to the issues in question.

The data were collected at weekends during April and May 2014 at Loučeň castle located in the Central Bohemia region. This castle was chosen for number of reasons. First, it was easily accessible and I had already known it prior to the research. Second, it has a long tradition in specialized guided tours for families with children. Third, Mrs Šrámková, the representative of the castle, expressed interest in the study when informed about its aims and readily gave her permission to conduct the research at the site.

Referring to the limitations of the research in general, I agree with Stake (1995:51) that "*there is always too little time,*" especially to collect and process the data. Furthermore, the data collection period was outside the peak season of castles which is in summer holidays (July, August). Thus, less visitors and so objects of the study were encountered at the site. Likewise, the weather emerged to be a limiting factor, as I experienced some rainy days bringing lower number of visitors than the sunny ones.

Having considered the main aims of the study, observations and semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate data collection methods consistent with the adopted paradigmatic stance and research approach. Their characteristics and limitations are further discussed within the Methodology chapter (see chapter 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). The next section explains the choice of participants for the research and describes their characteristics.

2.2.1 Sampling of participants and their profiles

The purposive sampling, as understood by Bryman (2008:415), was applied in this study of families with children attending the specialized guided tours at Loučeň castle. The family, similar to Wu et al. (2010), is understood in this research as at least one adult with one child having a family relationship. However, the rule of relationship was not fully followed as the perspective of family friends present when conducting the interviews was recognized as relevant for the research. Hence, the scope of participants was broadened.

Applying the purposive sampling brings into question the representativeness of the objects in this study. In order to enhance the representativeness of this research, a diverse portfolio of

families ranging from one parent and one child to three generation groups with children, parents, grandparents or friends, was included in the study. Moreover, according to Silverman & Marvasti (2008), complete representativeness and generalizability is unlikely to be reached within a qualitative study. Thus, it is not the object of the qualitative study to be fully generalizable; on the contrary, it aims to provide a better understanding of a certain phenomenon within the context in which it may be generalizable (Bryman 2008). The findings of this study might be generalizable in terms of patterns related to visitors' reactions and experiences.

All families participating in the specialized tours were carefully observed, in total 176 adults and 156 children. Some families were approached for interviews either directly after guided tours or slightly later when being encountered in the restaurant or at the courtyard. In total, 59 adults and 56 children were interviewed. In addition, Mrs Kateřina Šrámková, the representative of Loučeň castle, was included in the study in order to obtain information and better understanding of the concept of the specialized guided tours from marketer's perspective. However, as the focus of this study is mainly on the tourists, these insights from the supplier's perspective serve rather to complement the tourists' perspective and gain a more holistic picture of the tour concept and the tourists' experiences.

2.2.2 Observations

Drawing on Boote & Mathews (1999) and Silverman & Marvasti (2008), observations can be used as quantitative or qualitative methods of data collection depending on the way they are conducted and what they examine. Observations allow the researcher to study the participants under real life conditions and time. This may help *"to elicit behaviour patterns of which those being observed were largely unaware"* or to "*record what consumers actually do, not what they claim to have done"* (Boote & Mathews 1999:20), for instance, through uncouncious reactions during the tour like excitement, pleasure, fear or displeasure. Therefore, they might provide an important set of data which would not have been revealed when only interviewing the participants. Moreover, observations were suggested by Boote & Mathews (1999) as a helpful tool when researching children, who may not be able to reflect verbally on their experience.

The conducted observations could be considered as a hybrid type between structured and unstructured ones (Boote & Mathews 1999). Having studied the topic thoroughly, building on my experience and having consulted the representative of Loučeň castle allowed me to

construct a small guide for observations (Appendix 1) mentioning the issues which were at the main focus of this study. Nevertheless, leeway was given for new, non-expected information. This approach allowed the hermeneutical circle to be enacted and it enabled me to be open for new approaches to complement or revise my previous knowledge. Some of the notes were used as a foundation for the semi-structured interviews which followed the conduction of the observations.

Using Boote & Mathews (1999), the observations may be further characterised as covert participatory observations. The participants were not informed about the observations with intention to avoid altering their behaviour (Kumar 2011). However, not having informed the participants about the research raises some ethical considerations (see chapter 2.3). Even though the visitors were not informed about the study, they might have suspected it, as I was making notes and taking photos during the tours. Nevertheless, I tried to merge with the group and act naturally in order not to distract the visitors and cause change in their behaviour.

I participated in 17 guided tours in total. Following the observation guide, I observed not only the visitors, but the guides and the physical setting, intending to note all the interactions and set the phenomena into context, as suggested by Stake (1995). I attempted to focus to the same extent on all members of the group, but also on the group as a unit, studying the differences/similarities in the behaviour and reactions of children and adults. In addition, I took some photos to document the observed phenomena and support my findings (see chapter 4).

Observations are critisized for the incomplete set of data they provide the researcher with (Kumar 2011) as one cannot see and note everything when focused on a particular thing. This limitation was addressed by using the observation guide contributing to collect as much relevant data as possible. In addition, Boote & Mathews (1999:19) argue that observing participants *"can only uncover patterns of, not motives for, behaviour"*. In order to overcome this limitation and in line with Bryman (2008), the semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants. Direct questioning allowed me to clarify some reactions noted during the guided tours. Thus, the space for misinterpretation of the notes was reduced.

2.2.3   Semi-structured interviews

Stake (1995: 64) considers interviews as "*the main road to multiple realities*" which goes in line with the applied paradigm (see chapter 2.1.1). In more detail, this method detects "*the interviewee's point of view*" (Bryman 2008:437) and enables the participants to reflect on the

situation *"from their own perspective and in their own words"* (Kvale 1996:70) giving the researcher *"rich, detailed answers"* (Bryman 2008:437). Therefore, these interviews may provide the inquirer with *"knowledge about human experience and behavior"* (Kvale 1996:72), such as consumption patterns, lifestyles, desires, but also the meaning assigned to issues in question. Following this logic, they can reveal the visitors' experience and their opinions on the concept of the guided tours.

According to Bryman (2008), the semi-structured interviews are both systematical and flexible: they help the researcher to cover the necessary topics by using an interview guide, but at the same time, enable immediate reactions and further elaboration on the information acquired during the interview. Therefore, they provide the researcher with space to interact with the participants or explain the question if necessary (Bryman 2008). The latter mentioned, was particularly appreciated in this study, given the inclusion of children. E.g.: When the participants started to talk about having visited another castle, I asked them to compare the experience. When children looked confused, I tried to reformulate the question or give some examples to enable them respond.

Kvale (1994) is convinced that the data collected from the interviews originate in the interaction between researcher and the participant which might be considered at the same time as *"a vice or a virtue of qualitative research"* (ibid.:159). That is linked to the previous discussion about the subjectivity and researchers bias (see chapter 2.2). On the other hand, it allows creation of more sophisticated constructions that would otherwise not exist (see chapter 2.1.2 and 2.1.3).

The success of the interview may be influenced by various factors – the experience and characteristics of the researcher, the willingness of the participants to answer and, very importantly, by the questions posed during the interview (Stake 1995). It has been noted that the wording of the question and their sequence may have an impact on the outcome of the interview (Kvale 1994). Hence, asking poorly constructed questions or arranging them into an unfortunate order may influence the amount and relevance of the collected data. Therefore, in line with the scholars (Bryman 2008; Kvale 1996; Stake 1995), I tried the questions out on sample participants prior to the research with the purpose of assuring their understandability and likelihood of providing relevant data for the research.

The researcher as an individual with experience and background can influence the flow of the interview. Therefore, I followed Kvale (1996:148) and prepared myself for the interview in

order to have "*an extensive knowledge of the interview theme*". Moreover, I attempted to be a good listener, as proposed by Stake (1995). Thus, I paid attention to what was said to be able to react promptly on given information instead of following blindly the prepared structure. E.g.: When the participants mentioned that they have visited some castle offering similar tours, I asked them to compare the concepts and their experience.

Two interview guides (Appendix 2 and 3) grounded in the theoretical background, problem formulation and research questions, covering important topics and questions, were prepared in order to ensure not omitting any essential issue (Bryman 2008; Kvale 1996). The first was prepared for Mrs Šrámková focusing, on the form and the aspects of the guided tours, the importance of such a product in today's tourism industry in the Czech Republic, but also her point of view on the experience of the visitors gained through her long-time experience at the castle. The second, concerning the travelling patterns, motivation, experience and evaluation of the tour by the family members, was designed for the visitors.

Both open and close ended questions were used (Kumar 2011). Nevertheless, given the aim of revealing participants' opinions, perception and detailed descriptions of the guided tours, the majority of the questions was open ended, as those allow the interviewee to respond more freely, broadly and in own words (Bryman 2008; Kumar 2011). Kvale (1996) introduces various types of questions, among those the leading ones which are usually criticized for invalidating the findings of the research and bring up some ethical considerations, especially when including children into the study (Kumar 2011). Therefore, no leading questions were incorporated into the second interview guide.

The participants were introduced to the purpose of the research, the process of the interview, and consequently asked whether they want to contribute to it or not. Receiving an affirmative answer, they were informed about the recording of the interview on a digital voice recorder. In the beginning, I asked questions concerning the socio-demographic variables (age of the children, family relations and place of residence). Then, I used the interview guides helping me to cover all the necessary topics. After the interview, I asked the participants if they have any questions or comments, and made few notes for myself in order to ease remembering the particular family when analyzing the data (Stake 1995).

Given the nationality of the participants and the inclusion of children, the interviews were conducted in Czech with the purpose of allowing the interviewees express their opinions without a language barrier. During the data collection period, I conducted and recorded 31

interviews in total – 30 of them with the families visiting the castle and one with Mrs Šrámková. All the records are at disposal on the enclosed CD.

The participating families were named by the letters of alphabet including the Danish (Ø, Æ and Å) and the Spanish (Ñ) ones[1]. In addition, the abbreviations introduced below (see Table 1) were used to label the family members.

mother	m
father	f
grandmother	gm
grandfather	gf
daughter	d
son	s
granddaughter	gd
grandson	gs
friend	fr

Figure 2 Abbreviations used for participants

Even though I tried to motivate the visitors as much as possible, the length of the interviews ranged from 3 to 12 minutes. Nevertheless, as argued by Bryman (2008), "*even short interviews are often quite revealing*". Therefore and in spite of their length, the interviews with visitors can still be considered as a relevant source of data. On the other hand, the interview with Mrs Šrámková lasted 50 minutes.

The whole interviews were transcribed to Czech. However, considering the time consumption, only the parts relevant for the analysis were translated to English. One may oppose that the translation might have altered the data. Nonetheless, this is considered as an irrelevant objection as I have a proficient level in English and I am native in Czech. I started to process the data right after their collection. Using the 'iretative' approach, as understood by Bryman (2008), I started the analysis in an early stage of the data collection process with the purpose of revealing the emerging themes (see Appendix 7). Applying the hermeneutical circle (see chapter 2.1.3), I allowed the gathered data to shape the research (Bryman 2008). Thereafter, I identified the main themes (see Appendix 8 on the enclosed CD) consistent with the research and started to contrast the collected data mutually and with the theoretical background.

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[1] The records on the CD are named respectively by the same letters as used in the transcript. However, I

Certain limitations emerged when conducting the interviews. When approached, some visitors were not willing to participate in the research. Moreover, some participants, especially children, were not able to reflect on the issues in question (experience, feelings, opinion, etc.) and articulate their answer (Boote & Mathews 1999; Bryman 2008). However, this missing data were complemented by the observations (see chapter 2.2.2).

2.3   Ethical considerations

Every research has its ethical considerations following from the methods of data collection, but also from the topic of the study and its participants. Including children into the research brings up some specific issues. First, I had to obtain parents' permission regarding the participation of their children in the study together with the agreement of children. Second, given that children are more vulnerable to be led in the way the researcher wants, I did not use leading questions, as I considered it unethical.

According to Bryman (2008), conducting covert observations implies two important ethical issues: lack of informed consent and deception. However, only the first one is considered as relevant for this study, because I did not present my study as something else invalidating so the second consideration (Bryman 2008). Nevertheless, in good sake of the research and collection of a relevant set of data, the participants were not informed about their role in the research and could not voluntarily decide whether they want to take part in it or not (ibid.). Furthermore, drawing on the characteristics of the observations, those might invade the privacy of the participants (Bryman 2008), which should be protected. Thus, in line with Stake (1995:59), I stopped observing whenever I would interfere "*with the lives of others*", in other words, when the participants started discussing their private lives or simply not the topics related to the study.

2.4   Quality criteria

Some scholars consider the quality criteria used to evaluate the quantitative research as inappropriate for the qualitative approach (Bryman 2008). Therefore, new set of criteria was created to establish and assess quality in qualitative research, and to assure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study (Guba 1981). As Bryman (2008) suggests, the influence of the criteria constructing authenticity is rather questionable. Therefore, the authenticity is excluded from the discussion.

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study has been questioned by various scholars despite the existence of the criteria for establishing it (Shenton 2004). Guba (1981) and Shenton (2004)

agree that the researcher can take various steps during or after the inquiry in order to make it trustworthy. The concept of trustworthiness is composed by four variables – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The criteria are one by one discussed below.

2.4.1 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with the level of consistence of the findings with the reality (Shenton 2004). The true presentation of the data may be achieved by various techniques addressed within this paragraph. Three different types of triangulation were applied in this study (see chapter 2.2) in accordance with Miles & Huberman (1994) and Bryman (2008). Moreover, the accuracy and efficiency of the methods chosen for the data collection, as required by Shenton (2004), has been proven by scholars examining similar topics and subjects (Hertzman, et al. 2008; Wu, et al. 2010). In addition, as proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994), the limitations of the research were acknowledged within the methodology chapter. Furthermore, I attempted to "*ensure honesty in informants*" (Shenton 2004:66) by introducing the interviewees to the purpose of the research, and giving them the option to participate or not. However, this does not apply for the participants of observations given the reasons discussed earlier (see chapters 2.2.2 and 2.3). In accordance with Miles & Huberman (1994), probing questions were used during the interviews to assure right understanding of the data and minimize the likelihood of their misinterpretation. In addition, the study will be presented to Mrs Šrámková, the representative of Loučeň castle. However, this will be after having handed in this thesis. Thus, this source to enhance credibility is not yet valid.

2.4.2 Transferability

Transferability represents the likelihood of applying findings from one study to other contexts (Bryman 2008). However, the ones obtained in qualitative study are rather specific and contextual, so "*it is impossible to demonstrate that* [...] [they] *are applicable to other situations and populations*" (Shenton 2004:69). Moreover, transferability is "*not assessed by the researcher but by the reader*" (Guba 1990:113). Therefore, I attempted to characterize the research as broad and accurate as possible with intention to enable another person to adapt it to different conditions (Miles & Huberman 1994). Thus, a detailed description of the steps taken along the research process was given within the methodology chapter.

2.4.3 Dependability

Dependability is "*concerned with the stability of data*" (Guba 1981:86) and can be assured by using overlapping methods (ibid.). Thus, semi-structured interviews and observations were

employed in this study compensating reciprocally their weaknesses with their strengths and resulting in a complementary set of data. In other words, what could not have been observed was questioned and vice versa. In addition, the collected data are available either on the enclosed CD (whole records of interviews, photos) or in the Appendixes (field notes and shortened transcripts of interviews translated to English).

2.4.4 Confirmability

The confirmability criterion requires the findings to reflect participants' not researcher's point of view (Bryman 2008). This may be obtained through the qualitative approach to this study (see chapter 2.2). However, "*the intrusion of the researcher's biases is inevitable*" (Shenton 2004:72). Thus, the confirmability is threatened by the projection of researcher's background and experience, which can be minimized by using certain methods such as triangulation. As already underlined, three types of triangulation were applied in this research (see chapter 2.2) in order to enhance its confirmability. Moreover, as introduced in the previous section, all data are at the disposal of the reader (Miles & Huberman 1994).

The foregoing section has informed the reader about the methodological considerations of this study, its paradigmatic stance and research design. Moreover, it has raised some ethical issues and focused on the quality criteria establishing the value of the research. The next chapter is concerned with the academic literature reviewed for this study, and establishes the theoretical framework needed for addressing the problem formulation and research questions.

3 Theories

In the following chapter, the phenomenon of experience and how it can be created is addressed. First, the meaning of the tourism experience, its conceptualization and the issue of good experience are discussed. Second, these concepts are applied to the case of families with children, which is the subject of this study. Third, experience design and co-creation are scrutinized. In addition, the edutainment approach, mentioned in the introduction, is further examined.

3.1 Tourism Experience

According to Pine & Gilmore (1998), the entire economy, which includes the tourism sector, has undergone a shift from a product and service-oriented industry to a consumer and experience oriented one. Not only has the supply side changed. As McIntyre (2009) and Mossberg (2007:59) agree, the consumers are no longer interested in the mere products themselves but rather in "*the stories and experiences behind*" them. In accordance with McIntyre (2009) and Mossberg (2007), we can therefore claim that tourists seek these experiences in order to give meaning to their lives (Boswijk, et al. 2007) and enhance their intellectual self-development by acquiring new knowledge related to the destination or attraction, such as information about history or culture (Tung & Ritchie 2011). Following this logic, the tourism industry might be defined as an experience driven sector. Therefore, the concept of experience within the context of tourism was chosen as the main focus of this study.

3.1.1 Main characteristics

Despite the fact that the concept of 'tourism experience' has received much attention from scholars, no official definition has been agreed upon to date. Academics in this field are often divided into two generations: the first generation, represented in this study by its pioneers Pine & Gilmore (1998), examines the experience from the producers' point of view while presenting it as a designed and staged event, on the other hand, the second generation (Andersson 2007; Ek, et al. 2008; Mossberg 2007) understands the experience as a dynamic concept, and the tourist as an active agent who is co-creating it. Both 'service design' and 'co-creation' are further addressed within the theoretical section of this study (see chapter 3.3).

The tourism experience can be defined as "*something that is in sharp contrast or directly opposite to the daily experience*" (Mossberg 2007:63). By extension, we could argue that people go on vacations in pursuit of something different that allows them to step into another

world. According to Pine & Gilmore (1998:99) and Gram (2005), experience is defined as "*inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level*". In other words, the experience is filtered through the "*subjective lenses*" (Hertzman, et al. 2008:14) of each individual, "*linked to a certain time and space*" (Gram 2005:7) and dependent "*on the person, the time and* [their] *mood*" (ibid.); and various types of interactions. One can interact not only with "*the staged event (like a theatrical play)*" (Pine & Gilmore 1998:99), and the space itself (physical settings), but also with the other human beings present in the environment, such as relatives, companions or complete strangers (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009; Bitner 1992; Tussyadiah 2013).

With regards to the interaction amongst the visitors, Hertzman, et al. (2008:165) noted that a sense of group may originate from the involvement "*in the same engaging and interactive performance,*" resulting in shared experience - which is especially sought by the families (see chapter 3.2) - and sense of connection with other members of the group. However, at the same time, Tussyadiah (2013:9) argues that "*the same tourism activity can generate different experiences,*" which confirms the experience subjectivity. Likewise, Tung & Ritchie (2011) and Pine & Gilmore (1998) consider duplicating, and therefore encountering two individuals with the same experience impossible. Hence, this study is likely to reveal different individual's experiences with some patterns or aspects in common. In order to better understand the phenomenon of experience, scholars have made numerous attempts to conceptualize it. The classifications relevant for this study are discussed in the next section.

3.1.2 The conceptualization

Pine & Gilmore's (1998) theory of four experience realms - entertainment, educational, escapist and aesthetic, all of which are dependent on the level of customer participation (active/passive) and the connection to the event (absorption/immersion) - is considered as one of the first experience concepts. However, this conception has been widely criticized for being too supply driven, as well as for failing to consider the role of the consumer on the experience creation. Many experiences - such as the guided tours which are the subject of this study - may actually belong to all four realms depending on the individuals and their willingness to participate or relate to the event. In spite of the criticism, this theory is still considered as relevant for this study as it can be used for the first conceptualization of the experience from the guided tours. Such information may be well used in target marketing when developing a strategy for particular markets.

Prentice (2001) divided experience into two categories: immediate and mediated. The first originates from direct interaction between the consumer and the service, whereas the second includes an intermediary who facilitates the experience. Relating this categorization to the case of Loučeň castle, the guided tours may be understood as mediated experiences given the presence of the guide. An opposite example, for instance, is visiting labyrinths in the park, which would be classified as an immediate experience originating from the pure interaction with the environment.

According to Quan & Wang (2004), experiences may be divided into 'peak' and 'supporting'. Using this categorization, the peak experience is directly related to the main motive of the travel. In other words, it is the reason for which the tourist seeks to travel. On the other hand, the supporting experiences are the result, or consequences of the peak experience. Supporting experiences - such as eating, accommodation, transport, etc. - form part of, and contribute to, peak experiences. However, making a clear distinction between the two can be difficult, as supporting experiences may be transformed into peak experiences and vice versa. In addition, the distinction between these two types of tourist experiences is only conceptual, as the tourist perceives the experience itself as a whole (Mossberg 2007).

Based on Larsen (2007) and Ek et al. (2008), experience can be divided into three stages:

1. before (expectations);
2. during (perception, on-line experience, actual experience);
3. after (memories).

Despite the fact that they were presented separately, these three phases are related in a "*hermeneutic circle*" (Ek, et al. 2008:127) and may influence one another (Larsen 2007). In other words, the tourist comes to consume the service with certain expectations that together with other factors (see chapter 3.1) affect the perception and the actual experience (Bitner 1992). The acquired experience is later on transformed into memories, which have an impact on the future decision making processes, shape expectations and behaviour towards the tourist services consumed in future, and construct tourists' identity (Larsen 2007). Furthermore, Larsen (2007:14) claims that the 'after' phase (memories) "*predicts the tourists' desire to repeat that current experience*". It is therefore advantageous to ensure that the tourist leaves with positive experiences, as these may produce a number of favourable effects.

Given the main object of this study, emphasis will be placed mainly on the middle phase of the scheme concerned with the on-line visitors' experience. However, separating this phase from the others is not completely possible, as they form an on-going process of experience creation. Thus, expectations and memories are marginally addressed in the study as the participants disclosed their previous experience (memories), which may have shaped their expectations, and consequently their experiences.

As indicated, the middle phase is concerned with the perception of what is actually happening around the tourist. Larsen (2007:12), who studied experience from a psychological point of view, characterized perception as "*the interaction of the information in the current stimulus situation and various types of processes and mental structures in the individual*" necessary for capturing the information. In addition, he argues that the perception is influenced by one's "*personal values, opinions, worldview – including attitudes – and self-perceptions*" as well as by "*motivational and emotional states,*" (ibid.) which is clearly related to the discussion in the previous chapter (see chapter 3.1). In addition, the actual experience is shaped by the expectations held in consumers' minds (Larsen 2007).

In regards to the middle experience phase, Mossberg (2007:60) noted that "*tourists consume or experience all the times during the journey,*" thereby applying the understanding of the word 'during' to ideas which may not be directly related to the consumed service, but may influence the overall experience. For example, when the man in charge of collecting payment in the parking at the castle is rude, the experience from the castle will be less positive. Therefore, the research was conducted at the time the experience was happening and when the perception was fresh in the minds of the tourists, with the end goal of minimizing the influence of posterior situations on tourist responses. In addition, studying actual behaviours and perceptions has a practical implication for marketers, as it provides a more complete understanding of tourists' preferences that can be used for delivering the desired experience (Boswijk, et al. 2007).

3.1.3 Hunt for a good experience

Drawing on the academic literature (Frow & Payne 2007; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Tung & Ritchie 2011), it could be argued that both producers and consumers aim for a good, memorable, and meaningful experience. Consequently, the producer wants to please the customer, and consequently maximize his/her profit. Given that the characteristics of an experience are inherently personal and influenced by numerous factors (see chapter 3.1.1),

and that what is perceived as good for one may not be good for another, there is no universal guideline for describing or designing a good experience (Gram 2005). Nevertheless, many authors today are engaging in the discussion about the essence and the components of a good experience.

Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre (1989) define a good experience as a state when an individual considers the challenges offered by the environment match his/her own skills. However, these are not the only factors that affect the quality of an experience. This evaluation is also influenced by "*the levels of cognitive efficiency (e.g., concentration) and motivation (e.g., wishing to do what one does)*" (ibid.:816). According to Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre (1989:817), the best experiences occur when the person is in 'flow': "*both challenges and skills are greater than the respondent's average*" and a balance is struck between them. Being "in flow" can provoke a number of feelings such as happiness, creativity, satisfaction and strength. Using Pine & Gilmore's (1998:102) framework, we could argue that the flow – the richest experience - may be encountered in the intersection of the four realms termed as "*a sweet spot*". This experience is also the most meaningful and memorable, especially, when engaging all five senses (Boswijk, et al. 2007), appealing to the emotions and letting the consumer forget about the reality and time. In addition, as Mossberg (2007) and Pine & Gilmore (1998:104) agree, when pleased, the customer is likely to purchase some souvenir - "*a physical reminder of an experience*".

Examining the good experience from different perspective, it could be claimed that an experience is rated as good when it fulfils or exceeds the expectations (Tung & Ritchie 2011). When this occurs, the consumer is satisfied. On the other hand, when expectations are not met, the consumer experiences a sense of dissatisfaction (Vittersø et al. 2000). In addition, Vittersø, et al. (2000) argues that the evaluation of the attraction and experience depends on the basis on which the tourist judges it. Evaluations, therefore, depend on the level of expectations.

Carr (2006) asserts that good experiences are a powerful tool that can increase the likelihood of revisiting and spreading positive commentary about the site. In addition, it may represent a competitive advantage for the provider (Teixeira, et al. 2012). However, for the effect to be complete, today's consumers require certain level of control (or at least the feeling of being in charge) over the experience and some space for "*self-discoveries*" (Tung & Ritchie 2011:1372). This is related to the discussion about experience co-creation (see chapter 3.3.2).

3.1.4 Summary

Based on the previous discussion, we could argue that the experience from the specialized guided tours and its evaluation are influenced not only by the visitors (individuals with certain cultural and social backgrounds), but also by their expectations, previous experiences, knowledge and mood when consuming the service. Moreover, it is affected by the interactions with other tourists, employees and the castle itself. In addition, looking upon the experience from different perspectives, it may be diversely categorized using the concepts presented above. Having discussed the phenomenon of the tourism experience from a general point of view, it will be applied to the case of families with children in the next chapter.

3.2 Family tourism experience

According to Gram (2005:6), the family may be defined as *"a unit of individuals who seek experiences together,"* thereby challenging the concept of individualistic experience. Wu, et al. (2010:709) argues that "*family has a sense both of a collective and of an individual interest(s) and experience*" that can enhance social relationships, resulting in "*increased appreciation of family and relatives*" (Tung & Ritchie 2011:137). Indeed, Ek, et al. (2008) states that sociality makes the experiences more delightful, but at the same time, can provoke a disharmony and even "*generate stress and conflicts*" (Gram 2005:2), as families do not spend very much time together on a daily basis (ibid.) and the motivations and experiences of their members differ (Carr 2006). These topics are addressed in the following chapters.

3.2.1 Children

Historically, academic literature (Carr 2006; Gram 2005; Gram 2011; Øksnes 2008) has largely dismissed the role of children as consumers in tourism, which is reflected by the dearth of academic articles. Nevertheless, the situation has changed. Cullingford (1995) termed children as the tourists of the future, highlighting the fact that this population, when older, will be affected by their travel experiences from their childhood. Moreover, he underlined their role as current and future decision influencers and makers. Following this logic, the role of children in the decision making process and their views on experiences should be taken into consideration. Even though Wu, et al. (2010) and Cullingford (1995) agree that children are capable of evaluating their experience in the tourism context, they were generally not invited to express their opinions in the studies that were written about them. This study aims to address this gap in research by interviewing not only adults, but kids as well.

According to McNeal (1999:23 in Gram 2005:4), "*kids are not just mini-adults,* [...] *they are wired differently, act differently, talk differently, see the world differently*". This difference in the perception of a situation between a child and an adult is reflected in the following statement: "*Walking, reading and looking at buildings may be 'active' for an adult, but tend to become boring very quickly for children who need and want more stimulation*" (Nickerson & Jurowski 2001:27). Hence, one could argue that children develop their own frameworks through which they understand their touristic experiences (Gram 2011). In addition, drawing on Ek, et al. (2008), we could argue that children not only percieve, but actively co-create the experience.

Children generally associate the perfect vacations with all the pleasures they have at home plus some extras (Cullingford 1995). Indeed, Gram (2005) revealed that they are often allowed to do things that are prohibited at home which allows them to "[live] *a distinct experience*" (Cullingford 1995:125). Moreover, children do not like to be pushed into activities during their leisure time (Øksnes 2008). Following this reasoning, we may state that children identify holidays with "*beaches, good food, entertainment, no work and good weather*" (Cullingford 1995:123).

On the other hand, kids generally do not associate vacations with cultural sightseeing. In many cases they do not even get a chance to try it as many parents hold an assumption about children's lack of interest in cultural sites (Cullingford 1995). However, when visiting some "*they* [may] *show a great deal of interest*" (ibid.:125), especially when they can engage with the cultural attraction by "*activities, sensory experiences and play, where they are active and absorbed – preferably with other children*" (Gram 2005:11). In other words, children are eager to explore the world on their own through enjoyable activities engaging more senses at once (Cullingford 1995; McIntyre 2009). Nevertheless, drawing on the general discussion of the tourism experience (see chapter 3.1.1) and Øksnes's (2008) findings, what one child considers as gratifying is not necessarily considered enjoyable by the other. Therefore, the children participating in the guided tours may perceive and evaluate its aspects and the tour as a whole in different ways. However, at the same time, they will be subject to the transferability of the emotions within a group (see chapter 3.1.1), and can eventually enjoy the activity originally considered meaningless.

Based on Pine & Gilmore (1998), Gram (2005) classifies a good experience for children into the escapist realm, as they like to forget about the outside world by immersing into the tourist

activities, which often bring sensory experiences. Thus for a child, being on an enjoyable holiday means living in another world that they would visit repeatedly, if given the opportunity to do so (Gram 2005).

3.2.2 Adults

Traveling with children and spending the time with them may be considered as one of the main motives for vacations among adult family members (Gram 2005). Nevertheless, the sharp contrast between the quantity of time spent together during holidays and the amount of time spent together on a daily basis reveals an intersting paradox: Gram's (2005) findings show that many parents feel it is good that their children can be entertained without them in a safe, creative environment with other companions of their age, and believe that these activities involve not only "play" or "fun time", but also facilitate the development of creative skills and an active imagination. Hence, parents can fully enjoy themselves and their time without having to worry about participating in activities that would solely please their children (Gram 2005; Johns & Gyimóthy 2002).

In the same vein, Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre (1989:815) note that "*adults enjoy leisure activities only when these are perceived to be freely chosen*", without being pressured by someone else - including their children. Adults themselves tend to identify relaxation as their preferred activity (Gram 2005). Hence, a good experience of adults can be categorized into the aesthetic or non-event realms, as identified by Gram (2005), which is an extension of Pine & Gilmore's framework (1998). However, some adults engage with their children in the activities that offer sensory experiences (Ek, et al. 2008; Gram 2005), which would be classified as a part of the escapist realm.

3.2.3 Good family experience

As the family interrelates two market segments – adults and children, who define good or successful holiday experiences in different ways, it is rather difficult to achieve a pleasant experience for all family members (Carr 2006; Gram 2005; Johns & Gyimóthy 2002). In contrast with the association of vacations with something pleasurable, family vacations may result in stressful time for adults, as they feel responsible for the "success" of the vacation. According to Gram (2005), establishing a pleasant atmosphere and acquiring a good experience is very much influenced by the age of the children. Younger children are considered as incapable of putting their needs aside (Gram 2005); hence, these must be unconditionally fulfilled in order to obtain a positive atmosphere. On the other hand, when

having older kids, the best way to achieve an optimal atmosphere is to invite children into the decision making process (ibid.).

In accordance with Gram (2005:19), a good family experience is located in "*the escapist domain where parents and children are immersed in activities together* [...] *and are talking about it together afterwards, turning it into a story which becomes part of the family identity*". Therefore, whether the vacations are percieved as good or not is dependent on children, as the joint experience is encountered in 'their' preferable realm. In other words, the needs and wishes of children must be satisfied in order for the parents to have good holiday. Having discussed the issue of family experience, we will now focus on the way this experience may be orchestrated or co-created.

3.2.4 Summary

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is evident that families, as units, seek shared experiences. However, as illustrated, children and adults may have different understandings of what constitutes a *good* experience. In general, children pursue more active, engaging and sensory experiences, whereas adults seek out more "passive" activities, such as relaxation. Moreover, children and adults may perceive the same experiences differently. Following this logic, achieving a good family vacation experience is a rather challenging task dependent on individuals' characteristics and the age children.

Having discussed the experience both from the general and family perspective, the process of experience construction will be addressed in the following chapter.

3.3 How to create an experience?

The experience design and its co-creation are much related concepts and have been thoroughly studied by the academics in recent years. Both are considered relevant for this study, as the specialized guided tours at Loučeň castle are a regularly offered service (designed) that are, at the same time, subject to influence of the particular visitors (co-created).

3.3.1 Experience design

The experience design is concerned with "*designing products, services, processes, events, and environments with a focus on the quality of the user experiences*" (Shedroff 2001 in Tussyadiah 2013:4) resulting in new attractive concepts improving the engagement and relationship between producer and consumer, who is the core of the experience design

(Tussyadiah 2013). Therefore, Tussyadiah (2013:5), likewise Guba (1989) for the researchers (see chapter 2.1.2), suggests the marketer stepping into the consumer's world to understand his *"needs, wants, expectations, and limitations of the end users"* and see experiences from his perspective.

However unique and special the experience is, it must still *"be worth the price"* (Pine & Gilmore 1998:101), because the tourist will compare the costs and the outcomes before purchasing it. Referring to this notion, Boswijk, et al. (2007) and Frow & Payne (2007) suggest the marketer to keep in mind the economic side of the service (experience); in other words, to be aware of the costs of the service. In addition, the experience should not stay static, but keep evolving through innovation and creativity, intending to always be a step ahead of the competition (Boswijk, et al. 2007). In regards to that, it is advisable to add some element of surprise in order to differentiate the experience (Tung & Ritchie 2011).

However, Teixeira, et al. (2012) question the whole possibility of experience design, arguing that only the service can be designed, leaving space for the consumer to create the experience. Nevertheless, this study considers the discussions in the academic literature about service and experience design as highly overlapping and confusing for the reader. Hence, it holds a belief that the experience may be to some extent pre-designed, as both service and experience design are *"user-centered"* (Trischler & Zehrer 2012:67) and *"user participatory"* (ibid.:58), leading the discussion clearly to the phenomena of experience co-creation.

3.3.2 Experience co-creation

Ek, et al. (2008:127) claimed that *"tourists are both experiencing and designing"* and documented a performance turn, which may be explained as a shift from tourists as passive audience looking at the stage (first generation), into tourists as active agents of the experience co-creation stepping into it (second generation). In the view of the evolution of the tourist into a more sophisticated and demanding individual (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009), *"the development of meaningful-experience concepts cannot take place without"* his direct participation (Boswijk, et al. 2007:17). Thus, consumers are nowadays invited to be active – 'explore' and 'discover' the secrets of places on their own while assigning them their subjective meanings (Prentice 2001:10). Indeed, McIntyre (2009) revealed that people are interested in the stories behind the artefacts, but want to construct them on their own on the basis of provided information such as quotations and the language of the time. In relation to that, Binkhorst & Den Dekker (2009:312) argue that today's customers seek for *"a balance*

between control by the experience stager and self determined activity with its spontaneity, freedom and self expression," as confirmed by Tung & Ritchie (2011).

Binkhorst & Den Dekker (2009: 313), in line with Teixeira, et al. (2012), define co-creation as a "*process through which customers interact with the company and generate their own experience*" that is meaningful for them. Hence, the co-creation is about dialogue between the consumer and provider (Frow & Payne 2007), where both learn from each other (Boswijk, et al. 2007). Therefore, it is essential for the marketers to understand "*wishes, needs and desires*" of individuals in order to be able to create a "*memorable tourism experience*" (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009:322), as already suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1998). Moreover, the active participation may for the tourists represent an added value (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009).

Ek, et al. (2008:124) argue, that tourists are increasingly perceived as active agents in experience formation, and through interactions as "*co-creator*[s] *of tourist spaces*". Thus, "*both the host environment as well as (potential) visitors to the area should play a key role*" (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009:323) in the experience co-creation. Having in mind the principles of co-creation and using Mossberg (2007:61), the guided tours could be characterized as "*live product*s [that] *are produced in interaction with the consumer*". In other words, a visitor's experience from the pre-designed guided tour will be co-created by the tourist and his interactions with the service and the environment, including all its aspects, as discussed in the following chapter.

3.3.3 Aspects of the experience

The experience is from the point of view of the provider formed by various components, but perceived by the consumer as a whole (Bitner 1992). Drawing on the academic literature (McIntyre 2009; Mossberg 2007; Nelson 2009; Pine & Gilmore 1998), this holistic perspective can be addressed by themeing the experience in order to *"communicate the core values in an understandable and memorable way"* (Mossberg 2007:71). Thus, the theme as such determines the form of the particular experience components discussed below, which must be consistent with it for the purpose of transmitting a coherent image. That may be achieved by using positive cues able to support the overall theme and enhance the experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Following the foregoing discussion, we could argue that without the theme the guided tour would be just a set of fragmented items lacking the capability of providing the visitor with a pleasurable experience.

The cues, suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1998), might be identified with touchpoints - the points of meeting of the customer with the company (Trischler & Zehrer 2012). These interactions are present all along the consumption process - before, during and after the purchase, and unequally influence the overall experience (Dhebar 2013). Thus, one unpleasant interaction may overweight the effect of the others. Hence, the touchpoints should be managed carefully from a holistic perspective to convey a coherent message consistent with the company values and create a welcoming environment for the consumer (Dhebar 2013; Frow & Payne 2007).

We could argue that the environment is everything that surrounds the tourist when perceiving/creating the experience. It has been studied and characterized by various scholars. First, Bitner (1992:58) introduced a 'servicescapes' - a place where "*customers and employees interact with each other within the organization's physical facility*". The servicescapes may serve for positioning and differentiating the company (ibid.). As the economy moved its focus from service to experience, Mossberg (2007:62) presented a concept of 'experiencescape,' understood as "*a space of pleasure, enjoyment and entertainment*". In relation to that, the experience environment may be seen as "*made up of all people and things that surround the human being*" (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009:319), where their interactions take place. In the same vein, Boswijk, et al. (2007:11) defined this environment as "*a space that enables dialogue, access and transparency – in fact a process of co-creation*" based on an equal participation of producer and consumer (for further information on co-creation see chapter 3.3.2).

The role of the environment is even more important as the services in tourism are usually inseparable - "*produced and consumed simultaneously*" (Bitner 1992:57) in given physical settings. Thus, the environment influences behaviour and experience of both customers and employees (Bitner 1992; McIntyre 2009; Nelson 2009). Bitner (1992) identified two types of behaviour evoked by the environment: approach (positive) and avoidance (negative). Those may influence the decision about staying and interacting with the place (ibid.). Therefore, drawing on McIntyre (2009:157), we can argue that cultural attractions have to offer a "*supportive space (and people)*" to make visitors stay and engage with the site. Unfortunately, given the various factors affecting one's experience and perception (see chapter 3.1.1), there is no optimal design of the environment appealing to everyone in the same way (Bitner 1992). In other words, being in the same place may result in visitors' different emotions and reactions.

Based on Nelson (2009:122) and his use of Goffman's Dramaturgical Perspective, we may relate any environment to the theatre where "*service personnel become the actors* [...] *while the customers become the audience*". In addition, equivalents for the rest of service components are formulated as follows: costumes instead of uniforms, props instead of physical equipment and physical settings instead of property (ibid.). The particular aspects of the environment, both static (physical settings) and active (people) are discussed below.

Physical setting

According to Nelson (2009:125), the setting created by various factors – furniture, décor, physical layout or stage props, may be a determinant of the customer's desire to "*stay, explore, work or affiliate with an organization*". As such, it can "*influence the nature of social interactions between the actor and the audience*" (ibid.:126) and among the members of audience themselves. Hence, when people feel uncomfortable they can decide to leave the environment, or alter their response to strangers to become negative (Bitner 1992).

In regards to that, Bitner (1992:62) argued that the setting influences the behaviours indirectly through the evoked "*emotions, beliefs, and physiological sensations,*" resulting in feelings of pleasure or displeasure and possibly arousal, understood as "*amount of stimulation or excitement*" (ibid.:63), and considered by Andersson (2007) as a good tool for intensifying the experience. Bitner (1992) suggests three aspects which might affect the preference of a place, namely complexity, mystery and coherence. The complexity is implied in "*visual richness, ornamentation, information rate*" (Bitner 1992:63) and it is supposed to enhance the emotional arousal. "*Coherence (order, clarity, unity)*" (ibid.) may increase the likelihood of positive evaluation of an environment. Based on the discussion in the previous section (see chapter 3.3.3), this could be achieved by using and carefully managing the positive cues/touchpoints. Mystery, as well as surprise, might represent something catchy and interesting for the consumer (Bitner 1992). Hence, we could argue when the setting includes these three characteristics, it is likely to be more appealing to the consumer and bind him to itself by an imaginary leash.

Apart from the aesthetic impression, the setting still has to fulfil its functionality, safety, security and the need for personal space in order to be well perceived (Bitner 1992; Nelson 2009). In relation to that, Mossberg (2007) presented the possible functions of the physical setting: facilitation of activities and interactions among the tourists and with the personnel (socializer); and the differentiation of the service from the competition. In addition, the

overall appearance of the setting can positively affect the categorization of the organization and the evaluation of the quality of the provided service (Boswijk, et al. 2007; Bitner 1992).

The foregoing discussion about the physical setting clearly links to the ambient conditions in the environment, such as noise, music, aroma and room temperature which can have an influence on the individual's experience (Mossberg 2007; Nelson 2009). Thus, when well designed they may enhance the experience (Nelson 2009). Therefore, engaging all five senses is suggested as a contributor to the creation of a memorable experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Prentice 2001). However, the marketer has to be aware of the fact that not all the combinations of senses work well (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

Actor

Nelson (2009) defines the actor as an intelligent person capable of adapting to the changing conditions in the environment. The actor is supposed to serve the customers, facilitate both information and knowledge, along with the experience. In order to enhance the role, the actor uses costumes and props. Mossberg (2007) agrees with Tung & Ritchie (2011) that the tour guides, as is the case of Loučeň castle, as well as the other front line personnel, may be considered as the key factor of the performance's success given their direct contact and influence on the audience. Nelson (2009) suggests that the evaluation of the actor will significantly affect the overall judgement of the quality of the experience. Therefore, it is crucial to find the right people and provide them with good training (Boswijk, et al. 2007) and an appropriate costume to enable them to play their character well, transmitting a positive image coherent with the environment and the theme (Nelson 2009).

Audience

As indicated above, in the tourism context the visitors represent the audience. The audience is an essential element of the performance; hence, it is the motive of its creation (Frow & Payne 2007; Nelson 2009). The audience may be understood as a social group formed by individual tourists who have certain reactions to the physical settings, the other members of the group and the employees. As already noted (see chapter 3.1.1), the emotional responses on the environment may be transferrable among the people who share it (Bitner 1992; Hertzman, et al. 2008). Hence, experiencing the same service with other participants is likely to result in a different experience. Indeed, Mossberg (2007) confirmed that customers may increase or decrease their individual satisfactions with the service or product. Therefore, the composition of the group can have an impact on the experience of its members.

3.3.4 Summary

Given the interrelation of the presented concepts – experience design and co-creation and the particular aspects composing an experience, it may be difficult to separate them and provide a comprehensible explanation. Nevertheless, the design is considered in this study as more supply driven, and the co-creation more demand driven. In regards to that, we could argue that the co-creation has become very popular within the tourism industry. Thus, producers aim for preparing an engaging environment and services that would please the consumers and let them live up to their own experiences, but preferably with the pre-designed aspects. Nevertheless, not all the elements of the experience may be planned and managed by the producer. Hence, even a perfectly designed environment does not assure the desired results.

Having discussed the experience design, co-creation and components in general, I will focus on one approach addressing these issues in particular in the next chapter: the concept of edutainment.

3.4 Edutainment

Edutainment has become a popular topic of discussion and research, except in the Czech Republic, where it is not well known yet. Edutainment is presented at this point of the study since it is being employed by various cultural attractions, and was assumed to be implemented in the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle.

The term itself is a neologism originating in the conjunction of two words: education and entertainment. Thus, the edutaining approach may be explained as a mixture of cultural and educational activities, incorporating modern technology and entertainment in order to provide an enriching, enjoyable experience (Balloffet, et al. 2014; Hertzman, et al. 2008; McIntyre 2009). Hence, it seems that the edutaining attractions are aware of the influence of the way delivering information has on *"the information itself and how the message being communicated is received"* (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967 in Hertzman, et al. 2008:6). In regards to this, Hertzman, et al. (2008:163) claimed that the entertainment format makes the information *"easier and more enjoyable to receive"*. Nevertheless, it would still be useful to answer the question of whether it is the best way to communicate knowledge to visitors. Balloffet, et al. (2014) discus both advantages and disadvantages of applying edutaining concepts in museums, and concludes that a balance between the educational and entertaining elements has to be set in order to keep its informative, meaningful and enjoyable (Hertzman,

et al. 2008), but not over-commercialized or meaningless, nature (Balloffet, et al. 2014; McIntyre 2009).

In addition, when well managed, the edutainment approach may contribute to creating a competitive advantage and serve as a means of differentiation (Nelson 2009). However, whether to adopt the principles of edutaining will always be a question for the marketer of a particular attraction, depending on its vision and target audience (Balloffet, et al. 2014).

Based on Hertzman, et al. (2008) and their case study of Storyteum, it could be argued that the edutaining attractions make use of "*live theater, music, special effects, visitor interaction and stagecraft*" (ibid.:160) in order to communicate the story, transmit knowledge and "*create a unique and dynamic tourism experience*" (ibid.:158). Hence, the attractions attempt to engage visitors' senses, as already suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1998). Moreover, the edutainment environment may facilitate the visitor entering the state of 'flow' (see chapter 3.1.3), often by means of play (Isacsson & Gretzel 2011), creating "*immersive and participative*" (Balloffet, et al. 2014:5) experience including "*emotional, moving, thought-provoking, uplifting and inspirational aspects*" (Hertzman, et al. 2008:164).

The development and changes in the tourism industry (see chapter 3.1), together with the edutainment concept, have revolutionized the traditional roles of some tourism attractions (Balloffet, et al. 2014; Hertzman, et al. 2008). In regards to that, public museums attempt to be more entertaining to enhance their attractiveness for visitors; likewise, private, and originally purely entertaining, attractions highlight their educational value. In addition, the cultural attractions in particular are often concerned with presentation of the past, which is usually highly valued by the consumers (Hertzman, et al. 2008). Thus, by offering their visitors 'travel in time' on edutaining principles, often romanticized or commercialized, they engage them in the historical settings (ibid.). That relates to McIntyre's (2009) findings that visitors ask for 'bringing the artefact into life'.

Drawing on the foregoing discussion, the specialized guided tours for children at Loučeň castle might be considered a part of the edutaining concept, as further addressed in the analytical part of the study (see chapter 4). However, before continuing to the analysis, a brief summary of the theoretical background will be provided.

3.5   Sum up theories

The theoretical chapter has characterized the tourism experience from the general perspective, relating it to a particular case of families with children. The factors influencing experience creation were identified and discussed. Moreover, various points of view on experience classification and assessment have been presented, underlying the subjectivity of categorization and evaluation. Furthermore, the concept of experience being inherent for an individual was challenged by the shared experience sought by families with children. In addition, the chapter has discussed the concepts of experience design and co-creation, and deconstructed the experience into its particular components. Thereafter, the edutaining approach related to the experience co-creation was described.

Having established the theoretical background needed for examination of the collected data, the analysis of the data is provided in the following section.

4 Analysis

This chapter will examine the collected data through the theoretical framework constructed in the previous section. First, the design and co-creation of the concept of the specialized tours for families with children at Loučeň castle will be addressed. Second, the experience of the families acquired while attending them with a focus on children and adult family members will be scrutinized. Prior to these discussions, a brief introduction of Loučeň castle based on the observations (Appendix 4) and the interview with castle's representative Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5) is provided to give background information for the case.

Privately owned Loučeň castle opened its gates on 7th July 2007 with a clear vision – welcoming every visitor three times in life, first, as a child; second, as an adult with children; and third, as a grandparent with grandchildren. From the very beginning, the castle aimed to offer guided tours focused mainly on the life at the castle instead of loads of historical data. The tours have been always conducted by a costumed guide. In 2009, when having gained some experience, the castle launched the first tour tailored to families with children. This tour was still telling the same story about the life at the castle, but in a bit different way, suitable for young audience. In regards to that, the main aim of the specialized tours was formulated by Mrs Šrámková as follows.

> "*We want to entertain the visitor. We want to give him experience he paid for. We want him to leave with the feeling he got a value for his money.*" (Appendix 5)

In the same vein, Mrs Šrámová wants the visitors to say something like "*yeah, that was fun and I've learned something*" (Appendix 5) when leaving the castle. Mrs Šrámková is convinced that they were the first castle offering such a product on a regular basis. Since then, these tours have spread to other castles and chateaux in the Czech Republic.

Nowadays, Loučeň castle offers quite a wide range of tours – classical, for children, with the White Lady ghost, chocolate and night ones. Furthermore, special programme is prepared for events, such as Mother's Day, Easter or Christmas in order to offer something new and make people revisit the castle. Nevertheless, given the main focus of this study and the time frame assigned for completion of the thesis, only the children and the White Lady tour were studied. The White Lady tour is a part of Open the 13th chamber project launched three years ago as a joint strategy of 10 castles and chateaux in the Czech Republic. The aim of the project is enhancing the attractiveness and visitation of the sites, as well as, offering something different to the tourists. The visitors have to collect 7 out of 10 keys, which they gain after solving a

crossword during the guided tour, in order to open the mystical 13th chamber. Referring to the children tour, it is worth noting that the children tour is recommended for children from 3 years[2].

Having introduced Loučeň castle in general, the focus is given to the design and co-creation of the experience of the tours dedicated to families with children.

4.1 The design and the co-creation of the experience

Based on the theories reviewed for this study and the data collected in an early stage of the research process, I assumed that one can encounter both design and co-creation of the experience in the concept of the tours at Loučeň castle. Moreover, I have suggested that the concept of the tours might be prepared under the edutaining approach. Thus, this section will study the gathered data with a focus on these notions. First, the concept of the tours is addressed. Second, its particular components and their interactions are examined.

4.1.1 The concept of the specialized tours

Drawing on the introduction and addressing the first research question, this chapter discusses the concept of the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle in order to provide the reader with its characteristics, and test whether the tours belong to edutaining approach or not.

> "*Welcome at Loučeň castle, I'm princess Karolína and I will be your guide. Today, we are gonna talk about the life of Prince Alexander and Princess Marie Thurn-Taxis. Follow me and after climbing the stairs we step into the time when the prince with princess lived here.*" (Appendix 4 - guide)

This is an example of how the visitors are welcomed at Loučeň castle. It can provide an interesting insight into the concept of the tour. Drawing on Pine & Gilmore (1998), we may identify in this fragment of the speech the main theme of the tours - "*the life of Prince Alexander and Princess Marie Thurn-Taxis.*" As argued earlier in the study (see chapter 3.3.3), the theme is required for assuring the coherence of the transmitted message and influences the particular components of the tour. The indicated theme sets the tour into the time of Alexander and Marie and leads visitors through their dining room, music room and private rooms (see image 1 on the next page) while unfolding some chapters from their public

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[2] Official webpage of Loučeň castle http://www.zamekloucen.cz/detske-prohlidky-zamku.

and private lives. For instance, the visitors are informed about their children and taken to the play room with toys (see Image 2) and school, during the children tour.

Image 1Alexander's room

Image 2Play room

The basic facts about the aristocrats and the Thurn-Taxis family are repeated various times along the tour to enhance the probability of memorizing them. The achievement of making the young visitors remember this information is supported by the means of play, as proposed by Gram (2005). Hence, children are informed in the very beginning that they might get a sweet prize in the end of the tour if they answer right the questions posed by the guide. Thus, in pursuit of the sweets the children keep better their attention and are likely to remember that

Prince Alexander liked cats and played violin, and Princess Mary liked dogs, painting and she was writing fairy tales. Indeed, children are very eager to answer the questions in the end of the tour and they are usually right (Appendix 4).

Referring to the introductory quote, we can argue that it implies some edutaining aspects (see chapter 3.4). First, drawing on the case of Storyteum (Hertzman, et al. 2008), the act of stairs climbing may be perceived as an equivalent for a time machine which sets the visitors on a journey to the past and lets them enter another world, which is according to Mossberg (2007) the thing especially sought by the tourists. Second, theatrical aspects, as proposed by Hertzman, et al. (2008), are included. The guide speaks in the first person representing princess instead of her real identity. As proposed by Nelson (2009), the role is enhanced by an appropriate costume – historical dress, which is admired by women regardless their age. Their eyes are sparkling when looking at dresses of the princess or the White Lady; some females are even wishing to have such a dress at home (Appendix 4). Following this discussion, we could state that the costumes are perceived very positively. Moreover, the appearance enhances the illusion of the travel in time and so does the oral expression of the guide.

In line with the given role, the guide makes various comments during the tour in order to intensify the sensation of being in the past and guided by a historical or mystical character instead of an ordinary person, as illustrated below.

> *"I don't know taxis, but the visitors have told me..."* (Appendix 4 - guide)

> *"I would not know how to use the modern tools, but ..."* (Appendix 4 - guide)

> *"Who has ever seen that? To have the North up and the South down on the map? Well, you are maybe used to it, but in my time ..."* (Appendix 4 - guide)

The last statement is clearly documenting the conjunction of education and entertaining, and thus a different way of knowledge communication (Hertzman, et al. 2008). As observed, the guide gains visitors attention by posing the question and makes them laugh (Appendix 4). At the same time, the guide transmits new information about the former rules in cartography. A similar situation occurs in the dining room. The guide lets visitors sit down and then indicates where the prince and princess used to sit, and explains the basic rules of the etiquette of dining in the past (Appendix 4). Hence, the visitors are gaining new information while being entertained. They can interact with the environment and engage more senses at once. Moreover, they are generally surprised, as sitting in chairs is usually not allowed at castles.

Participant Im evaluated this interaction as ideal and pointed out that children "*are gonna certainly remember something in the future*" (Appendix 6). Consequently, the interactive nature is characteristic for edutainment, as proposed by Hertzman, et al. (2008), and sets favourable conditions for (co-)creation of experiences (see chapter 3.1.1).

In regards to the interaction, the guide poses many questions during the tour and "*gives them* [children] *some tasks to entertain them and keep their attention and not leaves them space to disturb*" (Appendix 6 – Agm). Thus, "*they have to search for something, count and so on, it works*" (Appendix 6 – Im). Indeed, as witnessed (Appendix 4), several tasks are given to children during the tour intending to engage them better with it, and it seems to be efficient. E.g.: Before the guide says the whole name of Princess Marie the children are asked if they have a good memory, and would be able to repeat the name afterwards. Hence, their attention is raised and they listen carefully to be able to fulfil this task. Furthermore, they can play piano or sing a song in the music room (see Image 3), find an animal in the study room, etc.
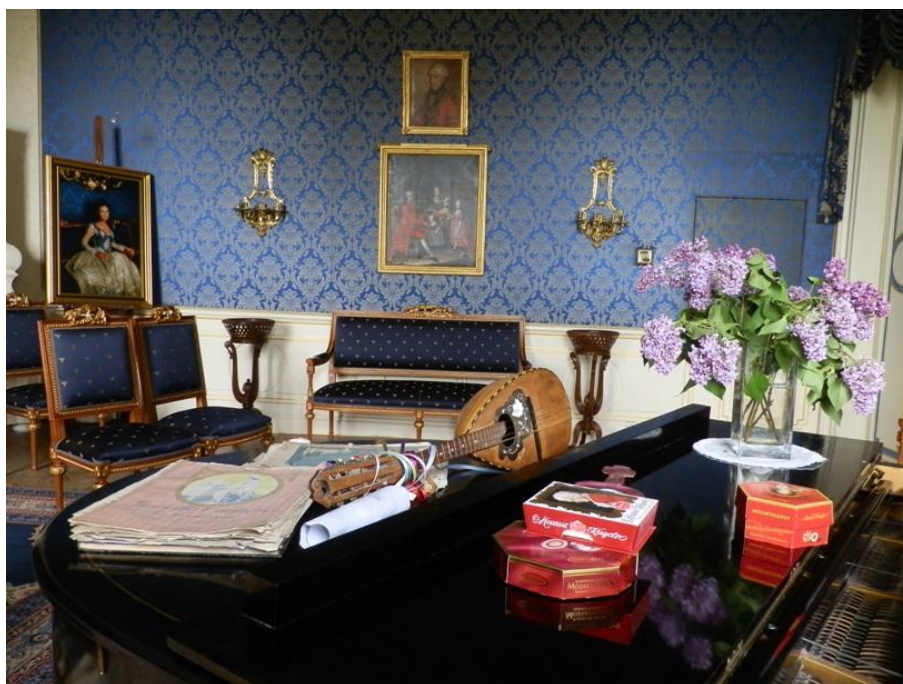
Image 3Music room

In addition, the guide calls young girls and boys princes and princesses to make them feel special and as a part of the life at the castle. Moreover, the guide aims to engage all children by eye contact and direct questioning. E.g.:

> "*Prince, what would you use to deal with the fire, what you would search for?*"
> (Appendix 4 - guide when looking at a small boy)

> *"Princess, do you know any Czech composer?"* (Appendix 4 – guide when looking at an older girl)

The dedication of the speech to children can be supported by the following example. When talking about the sugar factory founded by the Thurn-Taxis family – Thurn-Taxis Dobrovice (TTD), the guide comments on prince's affection for the sweets and asks children if they like sweets as well. Moreover, the guide gives them a task to check if they have sugar with the abbreviation TTD on the package at home.

However, not the whole presentation is targeted at the young visitors. In order to enhance the illusion of being in the past, the guide sometimes uses the language typical for that period of time. It was observed that children are rather confused when hearing these, often unfamiliar, terms. Thus, this could be considered as being more focused on parents. Participant Tfr (Appendix 6) commented that not understanding parts of the speech may cause loosing children attention. Therefore, explaining the terms could make the speech more comprehensible, and moreover, enhance the educative aspect of the tour.

On the ground of this discussion, we may state that the examined tours are clearly adopting the edutaining approach. The educative aspect can be identified with the information communicated during the tours and the entertaining one with the way the tour is designed and the knowledge transmitted. However, implementing these two components is not sufficient for the creation and facilitation of meaningful experiences. According to Balloffet, et al. (2014) and Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5), both aspects have to be in an equilibrium. This was addressed by the participants as follows.

> *"They have it really well done for kids, just few notions about history, just the things children would like and can memorize and the whole approach is nice and well, infantile, but in a good sense."* (Appendix 6 - Im)

> *"Well, I think it is mainly curiosities, that it is not about the classic tour with historical data and furniture that is another style. But I think that it is perfectly done for children, well educative."* (Appendix 6 – Jm)

> *"I think it was well done, short, so that children would not be overwhelmed. And the guide had a costume, that it was well tailored for children."* (Appendix 6 – Rm)

The presented statements and the above discussion indicate that that the educative and entertaining aspects are balanced within the concept of the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle.

In order to enhance the effects of edutaining approach, the tours include elements of fun and surprise, as suggested by Tung & Ritchie (2011). E.g.: The guide asks the princesses (girls in the tour) if they had brought a piano with them. They usually smile and shake their heads. The guide continues that "*princess Maria used to do it, because it was a custom at her time*" (Appendix 4). Another surprising moment is when the visitors are told that they can sit down in the dining or the music room, some of them even ask twice, whether it is really possible or not, before sitting down, as it is usually prohibited at the castles.

In addition, the effort to engage multiple visitors' senses, as suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1998) and Boswijk, et al. (2007), is implied in the concept of the tour. The visitors can see the things the guide talks about and in some cases; they can touch them or sit on them (play the piano in the music room, sit on the chairs), which is highly appreciated (Appendix 4 and 6). Furthermore, children receive some sweets in the end of the tour as an appraisal for their attention, so they can engage their taste. In regards to that, participant Hf proposed offering some food in the dining room and participant Qs suggested giving sweets in every room (Appendix 6). The sense of smell is not directly addressed, perhaps only by the flowers used for the decoration of the rooms.

To close the foregoing discussion, we may state that the concept of the tours has a balanced edutaining approach enriched by the elements of fun and surprise, and the engagement of more human senses at once. Hence, the theoretical assumption has been confirmed. The focus is now given to the particular components and their interactions creating and affecting the experiences acquired when attending the tours.

4.1.2 The components of the guided tours and their interactions

Drawing on Trischler & Zehrer (2012), we can identify some of the components with the touchpoints that can be encountered all along the purchase process – before, during and after. Information about the touchpoints active prior to visiting Loučeň castle was acquired through the interviews. Referring to these, it was only noted that visitors made use of the castle's webpage and evaluated it as being well done and informative (Appendix 6 – Nm, Rf, Sm, Vfl, Æf). However the 'before' touchpoints were not at the main focus of the study, they still appeared to be influencing the overall assessment of the experience, as suggested by Dhebar

(2013). Furthermore, touchpoints present at the site - physical setting, guide, and their interactions were directly observed and discussed in the interviews, and are analyzed below. The ones related to the phase after the visit to the castle, such as contact with the customer service department, were not researched given the aim and design of this study.

The particular components of the tours forming the service/experience environment (see chapter 3.3.3) and their interactions influencing the nature of experiences (see chapter 3.1.1) lived by the families and its members (see chapter 4.2), are addressed below drawing on the theoretical frame.

Physical setting = Outside and inside the castle

Loučeň castle is surrounded by a park where the visitors can enjoy 11 different types of labyrinths, for instance, wooden, stony or a light one (Appendix 4). As revealed in the interviews (Appendix 6), the labyrinths are an important trigger for visiting the castle, as they represent a "*different way to spend leisure time than running in forest*" (Appendix 6 – Pf) and complement the offer of the castle, as illustrated on the quote below.

> "*It is good that here you have nature, that you don't come and there is nothing else to do, so we were 2 hours in the park in the labyrinths.*" (Appendix 6 - Zf)

Apart from the labyrinths, one can encounter in the outside setting small stalls offering snacks and refreshments, but also a restaurant located just few steps from the entrance to the castle's building. As noted, the menu of the restaurant consists of simple meals and drinks, which can be evaluated quite differently by the visitors. Participant Vf2 was disappointed by the restaurant reasoning that there were no specialities. On the other hand, participant Um1 was very grateful for such an easy menu including children meals without meat.

Thus, based on the findings and the academic literature (Bitner 1992; Nelson 2009; McIntyre 2009), we can state that even though neither labyrinths nor the restaurant are inherent parts of the guided tour, they still may shape visitor's experience, as they represent part of the environment and, at the same time, the touchpoints. In addition, they can affect the feelings towards the environment, and influence the decision about staying and interacting with the castle.

The interior of the castle, where the guided tour takes place, is designed consistently with the theme to the Thurn-Taxis period. The visitors may encounter historical furniture, porcelain, wooden floors or ceilings, and many curiosities the Thurn-Taxis family brought from their

journeys all around the world. As already mentioned (see chapter 4.1.1), the concept itself makes the visitors interact with the physical setting because of the tasks given by the guide. E.g.: The visitors are counting the books in the library. They can sit down on the chairs in the dining room and take pictures (see Image 4); sit down in the music room and some of them can play the piano or the whole group sings a song there. Moreover, children can try out postman's costume (see Image 5) and weight the shoes he used to wear.

Image 4Dining room

Image 5Small postman and the princess

Motivated by these tasks, the visitors are exploring all the corners of the castle, examining the furniture, decoration and dresses closely by their sight. In relation to this notion it was observed that when discovering the rooms, the tourists are appreciating the beauty of the

exhibited items, as for instance, one visitor commented: "*everything they have is so pretty*" while taking pictures despite the ban on using the camera with an exception made in the dining room (Appendix 4).

Using Bitner (1992), we can analyze the factors of tour's physical setting proposed for enhancing the positive effect on the behaviour and preference of a place. Hence, the '*complexity*' is implied in the clear and comprehensible way of transmitting basic information – the schedule of the guided tours by the entrance to the area of the castle (Appendix 4), nice decoration of the interiors, well maintained outside area including the labyrinths, and the clear on-line presentation of offered products and services, already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. The '*coherence*' may be identified with the well managed concept of touchpoints transmitting the message of cultural attraction targeting families with children – again the on-line presentation, children menu in the restaurant, Mother's and Father's day celebration, the offer of the specialized programme for children and approach of the guide during the specialized tours. The '*mystery*' element can be encountered more in the abstract way, such as the usage of legends (the White Lady ghost and dog Alfons who is waiting in a dark hallway for disobedient children to catch and never release them) or invitation to step into the past or participate in a ghost evocation. However, some '*mystery*' elements can be directly seen within the settings such as hidden doors or the personified White Lady, as a tour guide.

Referring to the physical setting, participant Km appreciated that "*kids could touch the furniture, there were no ropes and we could walk on the carpet*" (Appendix 6). However, participant Zf opposed that "*there were everywhere signs not to touch things*" (Appendix 6), preventing the conservation of the items. However, the statement, that those warnings were everywhere, is quite strong, as only one or two were noted during the observations (Appendix 4). In addition, there are ropes preventing visitors to step into some parts of the setting in two rooms (Appendix 4). Nonetheless, in general, the space is fully accessible for the visitors. In relation to that Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5) revealed that given the historical circumstances affecting the castle, some pieces of the furniture do not possess such an important historical value. Thus, visitors may be allowed to directly interact with these, such as in the case of the chairs mentioned above.

However, once allowed some visitors, especially children, take touching things and sitting on chairs for granted (Appendix 4 and 6). One could assume that they feel attracted towards the physical setting. In regards to that, young participants Us and Yd commented:

"*I would like to stay there 200 hours.*" (Appendix 6 – Us)

"*Live.*" (Appendix 6 – Yd, answered the daughter when asked what else she would like to do at the castle)

Based on the current discussion and the collected data (Appendix 4 and 6), we could argue that the physical setting of the tours influences positively the feelings of the visitors, resulting in the approach type of relation between the visitors and the environment (Bitner 1992), and enhancing the experience (Nelson 2009). Moreover, the arousal, as understood by Bitner (1992) and Andersson (2007), can be identified in the reactions of visitors to the physical setting, as they were showing certain level of excitement. Consequently, the visitors are likely to stay and interact with the environment co-creating the experience, as confirmed both in the observations and the interviews. Likewise, the guide may influence the behaviour, interaction and experience, as addressed in the next section.

Actor = Guide

The academics (Mossberg 2007; Tung & Ritchie 2011) suggested the importance of the guide as a mediator and influencer of the experience, which was confirmed by my research and explicitly expressed by participant Vf2, who stated that the experience "*depends a lot on the guide*" (Appendix 6). In regards to that Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5) revealed that they, as the designers of the tours, in accordance with Boswijk, et al. (2007), pay a lot of attention to the selection and training of the guides, having in mind the task of playing a historical or legendary character which may not be suitable for everybody. The role of the guide at Loučeň castle is, in line with Nelson (2009), enhanced by an appropriate costume (see Image 7 on the previous page).

Moreover, as suggested by Nelson (2009), the guide should adapt the presentation to the current conditions, which may be in the case of guided tours at Loučeň castle understood in the terms of changing size of group, its composition - number of children and their age, and the interests of participants.

"*Today, it was very interesting. The princess was good. You know, generally, there are some old ladies at the castles who just tell the facts, but this was great, one of the best presentations we've had.*" (Appendix 6 - Bf)

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"I especially liked the guide, she was very nice. You know with kids it is always a risk, but she was not nervous. That makes it totally different, so I could relax as well." (Appendix 6 - Km)

"The young lady we had was skilful. Apart from being pretty she could catch their attention – nice dress and the overall impression." (Appendix 6 – Vf2)

Drawing on the above quotes, we may argue that the guides at Loučeň castle are able to tailor the presentation to the needs of the particular group and its members, contributing so to the overall positive experience of the visitors. Therefore, we could state that the guides are chosen and trained well.

The concept of the tours as introduced above (see chapter 4.1.1), requires the guide to transmit the information in an understandable and enjoyable way, and engage visitors into the tour. Indeed, by posing the questions (see below) and giving tasks, meant mainly for the young audience, the guide not only interacts with the visitors, but makes them relate to the physical setting, as already discussed.

"Where is annually held an important horse race?"

"Do you play football? And do you know where the first football team was formed in the Czech Republic?"

The interactions between the visitors and the guide emerge all along the tour being initiated mainly by the guide who makes the first approach in the very beginning of the tour by the introduction, as illustrated in the previous chapter (see chapter 4.1.1). Nonetheless, the visitors are welcomed to ask any question whenever they feel interested. However, usually only children make use of this opportunity, as for instance, young girls asking about the Teddy Bear on the Prince's bed or wondering where the Prince and Princess are buried. In contrast, adults are rather hesitant to ask reasoning that they *"did not want to interrupt the tour"* (Appendix 6 – Zf). In addition, it could be argued, that the visitors create the atmosphere and the experience not only for themselves, as addressed in the next section, but as well for the guide. E.g.: Visitors start talking among each other, which may signal to the guide that they are not interested in the tour. Moreover, they make it difficult for the guide to catch back their attention.

Furthermore, based on the research (Appendix 4 and 6), we may identify a phenomenon of reciprocity or 'spiral effect' in the '*guide – visitor*' and '*visitor – guide*' interaction regardless the starting point. This could be explained as follows. When the visitors like the guide and the presentation, they become more attentive. This makes feel the guide more confident, and consequently enhances his/her performance, resulting in more attractive presentation and better experience for the visitors.

Audience = Visitors

Drawing on Nelson (2009), the audience is in the case of the guided tours at Loučeň castle identified with the visitors attending them. The groups of visitors participating in the tours vary in size and composition (number of adults and children, age of children). Moreover, each group can be further divided into smaller units presented by the families, and consequently to the visitors as individuals with their backgrounds, interests, previous experience and mood (see chapter 3.1.1).

All the mentioned characteristics may have an influence on the experience of the particular visitors of the tours and the group as a unit. The majority of the factors, such as one's background, are beyond the influence of the provider. E.g.: It was noted that the visitors with the education in the field (history, art) are more critical to the design of the setting than the others (Appendix 6 – Jm, Tfr).

On the other hand, one easily manageable factor - the maximum size of the group, was identified by the observations as important in the experience formation. It was noted that when the group is too large (44 visitors), the amount of participants may deteriorate the experience. Some rooms at the castle are rather small, so the group does not fit in them at once. Thus, only the ones in the front can hear the guide and the rest of the group just follows the crowd without having a chance to get any information. Moreover, the visitors are getting confused about the route at one part of the tour as the guide enters two rooms and then goes back. In contrast, a group consisting of 2 participants (mother and son) was observed noting that the boy might have felt like being examined at school, as all the questions were directed to him. Moreover, the interaction with the other members of the group was very limited.

Following this logic, it could be argued that none of the extremes is good, and the ideal size of group may be suggested as being between 10 and 25 participants. This would allow the guide better interact with all the visitors while assuring a certain level of group members' interaction. However, influencing the minimum number of participants is possible only by

means of setting a limit conditioning the actual conduction of the tour which may in the end cause more negative than positive effects. E.g.: The visitors might be disappointed when told that there would be no tour unless other visitors come.

As the tours are targeted to families with children, their amount and age has been revealed as highly influential factors (Appendix 4 and 6). In particular, the age may affect the capability of keeping attention. E.g.: Very young children may first be interested but lose quickly their attention when no more feeling attracted by the tour. Moreover, when having an inconsistent group including children of many age groups; it becomes difficult to address all their different needs. E.g.: Children between 4 and 7 years appreciate a lot searching for colours, animals and so on, or get scared and curios when told about the ghost of the dog. In contrast, older children do not necessarily relate to these impulses.

A high level of interaction was noted especially among family members. This is intensified during the White Lady tour by the element of crossword solving (Appendix 4). Three different types of interactions among the family members were observed when some question was posed. First, the children go to their parents to ask about the right answer; second, the parents whisper the right answer to their children; third, parents are asking their children about the right answer in order to engage them with the tour. These interactions may plant a seed for shared family experiences, as further discussed within the analysis (see chapter 4.2).

In accordance with Hertzman, et al. (2008), the findings confirm the possible transferability of emotions within the group affecting the overall atmosphere and experience. E.g.: The children are told about the legendary dog Alfons, the child in the front of the group is scared to enter the hallway and goes back to his parents and so go some others. When something funny happens, everyone is laughing; people are giggling and winking at each other, creating a nice and relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand, when something unpleasant occurs, people are not so explicit and are rather whispering about the situation to their relatives while having annoyed expressions on their faces, such as in the case of an overactive small boy (Appendix 4).

On the ground of the above discussion, it could be argued that when the group is middle sized and more compact, so there are people of similar expectations and behaviour or kids of similar age range, the visit is more likely to be entertaining and pleasant for all the group members. Moreover, the tours can contribute to formation of shared experience originating in the interaction among visitors while being in the same physical setting, as proposed by

Hertzman, et al. (2008), especially in the case of families. However, these findings cannot be fully generalized, as not all the participants are keen on the active participation, as further discussed in the next chapter. Thus, the research also confirms the generation of different experiences by the same activity (Tussyadiah 2013).

4.1.3 Summary

As proposed (see chapter 3.1.3, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2), the consumers and their needs should be at the main focus of the producer when aiming to deliver a good experience. Drawing on the theoretical background of this study and the research, it could be argued that Loučeň castle has a consumer driven marketing approach based on addressing the needs of target markets by specialized products, as for instance, the tours for families with children examined in this study.

Based on the above discussed, we may argue that the guided tours have a designed structure and approach, in accordance with the edutaining principles. Nevertheless and despite the structure, every tour and the experience in acquired this will be slightly different, given the influence of various factors related to the guide, the audience, the settings and their mutual interactions. In addition, there are some aspects beyond the control of the service (experience) provider. Thus, in spite of the well designed tours, these might not be successful, given the presence of people with different background, expectations and behaviour.

Hence, the experience from the guided tours is co-created by the visitors as individuals and also members of a group, being affected and affecting the experience of other participants. The co-creation of the experience can be documented on the interactive nature of the concept of the tours letting visitors explore the castle and actively participate in the tour (Prentice 2001). Their experience is discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 Family experience from the guided tours at Loučeň castle

Having discussed the concept of the specialized guided tours at Loučeň castle, its components and interactions, the focus is now given to the visitors' perception and the experience acquired when participating in them. This section addresses the second and third research questions concerned with the visitors' experiences and the similarities/differences between adults and children.

To start with, the research confirms that visiting castles and chateaux is very popular among the families with children in the Czech Republic (Appendix 5 and 6). In contrast with

Cullingford (1995), it could be argued that children in the Czech Republic associate holidays with cultural attractions visits and some of them really like it, such as the following participant.

> "*Yeah, in general, I like visiting cultural attractions, I'm interested in it and this is something different.*" (Appendix 6 – Ds1)

Moreover, in some cases (Appendix 6 – Q, X, Å), children could be identified as the initiators of the visit. Nevertheless, in the majority of the cases, the parents were the ones choosing the programme while considering the needs of their children, as documented on the quotes below.

> "*We've been to many castles in our surroundings, mainly places that have something for children – small zoo, park or other attraction.*" (Appendix 6 - Im)

> "*We always try to find something where they have programme for children. Like at Staré Hrady. I think it is a good way to attract people.*" (Appendix 6 - Sm)

Drawing on these statements and the overall research, we can argue that this study confirms Gram's (2005) findings about families with children visiting attractions offering something special and suitable for kids. However, participant Gf noted that there is still "*a hole in the market, that there are few such a things,* [and] *that the coverage for this segment is not good*" (Appendix 6). This argument was supported by Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5), suggesting that more cultural attractions should apply family oriented approach addressing better the needs of this segment. Thus, the needs, perceptions and experience of children and adults are discussed in the upcoming sections.

4.2.1 Children

Prior to the actual analysis of children experience, it is noteworthy acknowledging that even though I aimed to use for this section only the information acquired in the interviews from children plus the findings of observations, I had to examine mainly the input from adults. In line with Boote & Mathews (1999), it emerged to be rather difficult to make children talk and give longer answers.

However, confirming Cullingford's (1995) and Wu, et al. (2010) findings, children were able to evaluate the experience, at least briefly. The most common answers referring to what children liked during the tour were the ones below mentioned.

> "*I liked, hmmm, I liked everything.*" (Appendix 6 – Dd)

> "*I liked the most everything.*" (Appendix 6 - Od)

Nevertheless, some children commented in particular on the aspects of the tour they liked the most, as illustrated in further quotations.

> "*Mum, that is a nice dress.*" (Appendix 4 – comment from a young girl when seeing the dress of the princess, her eyes were sparkling)

> "*I liked the most the sweets.*" (Appendix 6 - Hd)

> "*Yeah, the chairs were good.*" (Appendix 6 - Rs)

> "*I liked the most when we were counting the books.*" (Appendix 6 - Ud)

These statements indicate that the children enjoyed the tours, and consequently liked the interactive concept. In regards to that, Gram (2005) suggested that children generally pursue sensory experiences. Indeed, watching the decorations and dresses may be considered as a sensory experience which can be enhanced by the possibility of touching and trying the things out, as revealed in the research (see chapter 4.3). In addition, some children were exploring the physical setting on their own without being asked. E.g.: They were discovering the rooms and their furnishing, observing the decorations with curious expressions on their faces, sometimes touching the exhibited items. This might have been induced by the concept of the tours.

The affection for the engagement and the sensory experiences was broadly addressed by the adult members of the families, as documented on the quotes below.

> "*Well, when the children can engage with the tour that is definitely better than just the pure presentation where they cannot keep the attention. It is great when they can interact, search for something.*" (Appendix 6 - Cm)

> "*Or that they could sit down and touch. I think that is better and more enjoyable for them and that they learn something. There has to be some animation. If it is only speech they lose their attention.*" (Appendix 6 - Qm)

Based on these statements and in accordance with Gram (2005), we may argue that adults generally consider the active participation of children in the tour as a positive element. However, in line with Øksnes (2008), the research reveals that not all children are keen on these activities. It was observed that some children are not answering any questions or

fulfilling the tasks. Moreover, two young participants (Æd, Æs) explicitly expressed that they actually did not like the questions or the tasks.

On the grounds of the research and considering the level of engagement with the tour, we can identify two types of children within the group of visitors – the active and passive ones. The former group characterized by answering/asking questions and fulfilling the tasks, was in a particular tour usually larger than the second one. The second type may be further divided into two categories. First, as observed, some children could be termed as "*supposedly passive,*" as they wanted to participate but did not. E.g.: They say the right answer very quietly just for them without trying to attract the attention of the guide, perhaps, because they are too shy or unconfident (Appendix 4). Second, some children do not participate because they do not want; they are bored, not interested or too young. These three causes might be actually interrelated as the age of the child is highly influencing the perception and reactions. However, it is not the only affecting factor, as totally opposite reactions were noted for children of the same age. Therefore, the background accounts for the most importance in this case.

Following the above discussion, we could argue that Gram's (2005) findings that children enjoy the most active participation were not fully confirmed. On the other hand, the notion about their pursuit of sensory experiences could be considered as verified. Even though the children were not actively participating in the activities emerging from the concept of the tour, they were usually exploring the settings of the castle. In addition, all of them appreciated the sweets in the end of the tour wishing to "*have sweets all along the tour*" (Appendix 6 – Qs).

Interestingly, the presence of the mystery elements (see chapter 4.1.2) was found as an important part of the tour influencing children experience. E.g.: When mentioning the ghost of Alfons, the fiery dog, expression of fear sometimes mixed with curiosity crossed the faces of children. Moreover, several children did not want to enter the hallway without their parents. Some of them commented on this experience in the interviews (see below).

"*But good that the dog did not catch us.*" (Appendix 6 - Ød1)

"*Mum, I would like to see the dog.*" (Appendix 6 - Æs)

As documented on these quotes, the dog was a strong stimulus for children. In addition, as observed (Appendix 4), the children seemed interested as well in other mystery elements. That can be supported by the following statements.

"The White Lady was nice [...]*"* (Appendix 6 – Cd)

"I would like to participate in the ghost evocation." (Appendix 6 - Ød2)

Apart from the above discussed, it was noted that when the guide warned the children against leaning towards the walls, as they may disappear because of the hidden doors, many of them started to try it and were enjoying it. Thus, we could state that children experience was importantly affected by the mysterious shade of the tours.

In addition, two participants made comments linked to the edutaining concept of the tours:

"It is interesting, the people are very nice and you can learn more than at the normal guided tours. I liked it a lot." (Appendix 6 – Js)

"I don't know, I think it was entertaining enough, nice." (Appendix 6 - Xs)

We can identify both components of edutainment – education and entertainment (Balloffet, et al. 2014), in the quotes above. Furthermore, participant Js clearly appreciated that the concept of the tour (see chapter 4.1.1) facilitated him the acquisition of new knowledge, confirming so Hertzman, et al. (2008) findings.

Having discussed the nature of children perception and experience, the focus is now given to the adult members of the families.

4.2.2 Adults

Following the logic of the introduction to this section (see chapter 4.2), the adults come to Loučeň castle mainly in pursuit of a good experience for their children. Indeed, the majority of parents identifies their experience with the one acquired by their children and the fulfilment of their needs, as supported by the following statements.

"I always say that when the kids can keep their attention the whole time then it is great. And usually they remember something." (Appendix 6 – Cm)

"Well, it is interesting for us as it is interesting for children." (Appendix 6 – Gm)

"When my child is delighted I'm delighted too." (Appendix 6 – Im)

Referring to this, it was observed that parents are examining if their children are entertained and like the tour. Thus, we may state that the adults generally enjoy the tour when they assume that their children are pleased. Moreover, it was observed that adults play along with

the guide, intending to co-create the experience of their children, for instance, they call the guide Princess instead of just guide (Appendix 4).

On the ground of the findings and the theoretical background (see chapter 3.2.2), we might divide the adults into two categories - the ones who actually enjoy the tour from their individual perspective, and the ones who would rather attend another programme at Loučeň castle or do something completely different.

In regards to the first group, my findings confirm Ek, et al. (2008) and Gram's (2005) notion that some adults like to 'go back to their childhood' while being on holidays. In regards to that, it was observed (Appendix 4) that some adults are keen on answering questions and fulfilling the tasks even prior to children; are amazed and excited when allowed to sit down in some rooms of the castle; and seem totally immersed into the environment, as they are commenting on the precious furniture, and acting a bit like kids, as they want to 'take part of the castle' taking pictures in spite of the fact that it was permitted only in the dining room. Adult belonging to this type commented on the tours as follows.

> *"I liked the most that we could sit down in the dining room, you can't normally do that."* (Appendix 6 - Cf)

> *"It was not too long, without many detailed information, that what suits me."* (Appendix 6 – Dm)

> *"And what I liked especially were the sitting sessions that they could do something different than at the other tours."* (Appendix 6 - Sf)

> *"I liked it in general* [...] *even for me it was easier to understand it than the pure historical presentation. I'm interested more in the way people used to live than in the dates, I don't remember those."* (Appendix 6 – Æf)

Hence, we could argue that these adults enjoyed the interactive concept of the tour focused more on the life of Alexander and Marie Thurn-Taxis than loads of historical information. Especially, they highly appreciated the opportunity of sitting down in the dining room, as it was something special and surprising for them, increasing the likelihood of the positive evaluation of the experience. Thus, we may state that some adults as well as the majority of children (see chapter 4.2.1), pursue active engagement and sensory experiences.

Similar to the case of children (see chapter 4.2.1), what was welcomed by the first group of parents was dismissed by the second. Thus, the concept of the tour, as being more entertaining and less conceptualized in terms of historical data (events, paintings and furniture), does not suit to every adult, as documented below.

> "*The concept of the tour, for children easy, for adult well...*" (Appendix 6 - Pm)

> "*I would like to have some short history of the family, but I don't know if it would be possible to combine it with it because of the kids...of course, I understand that it cannot be presented in an entertaining way for children.*" (Appendix 6 - Um1)

> "*[...] I would have had a lot of questions, but I did not want to interrupt the tour, perhaps would be good to attend parallel the programme for adults.*" (Appendix 6 - Zf)

> "*[...] I was missing some things, it was limited to 19th century and I was doubting some things [...], I had not really found myself in it [...], I don't really know anything about the castle now, you know.*" (Appendix 6 - Øf)

Combining these quotes with the notion that the parents come to the castle because of their children, as mentioned above, one may assume that they would rather do something else. Moreover, they might have considered the participation in the tour as a sacrifice of time for the good sake of their children, supporting Gram's (2005) findings. In order to address this issue, participant Im proposed offering "*separated programme for children and parents*" (Appendix 6). However, as revealed by Mrs Šrámková (Appendix 5), they had already tried this without any success, as parents wanted to attend the tours with their children.

The failure of this experiment might be explained by the '*togetherness*' sought by adults while being on family holidays (see chapter 3.2.2). The togetherness was more apparent in the White Lady tours, thanks to the solving crossword element (see Images 6 and 7 on the next page). Nevertheless, it emerged also during children tours where some kids walked hand by hand with their parents, commenting together on the physical setting of the castle, the guide or discussing the posed questions (Appendix 4). Thus, a high level of interactions among the family members can be encountered in both tours.

Image 6 The White Lady

Image 7 The whole family solving a crossword

Even though the adults and children are sharing the same place, the togetherness paradox introduced by Gram (2005) was identified in the visitors' behaviour. Drawing on the research and Gram (2005), the concept of the tours sets good conditions for the paradox's occurrence. Hence, the castle may be perceived by adults as a safe place, the guide as someone being in charge of the kids, the concept as a facilitator of valued entertaining and the other children as the same aged companions. Therefore, several parents send their children to the front of the tour while staying back and enjoying the tour in their own way, as some of them disclosed.

"*And moreover, the kids get entertained, listen and we can look for what we like and enjoy it without being worried where they are and what they do.*" (Appendix 6 - Em)

"*I liked it a lot, because usually I suffer during the tours and do not know anything from them because I'm checking children, but this was good.*" (Appendix 6 – Um1)

In regards to that, participant Ñm was pleased that the guide communicated mainly with children and "*even did not need us* [parents]" (Appendix 6). However, this might be considered by others as a barrier. The guide is sometimes excluding the adults by not giving them any eye contact. Indeed, some adults are rather talking to their relatives or doing

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something on their phone instead of listening to the guide (Appendix 4). This might have been caused by various motives; however, the lack of eye contact might have been one of them.

Having discussed children's and adults' experience, its classification and evaluation will be given in the next section. However, the experience is examined not only from the point of view of the particular member, but the family as a unit.

4.2.3 The classification and evaluation of the experience

As discussed in the theory chapter (see chapter 3.1.2 and 3.1.3), there are many ways to conceptualize and evaluate an experience. The experience acquired by the families with children at Loučeň castle is examined in the following through the constructed theoretical frame.

Based on the provided discussion about the children's and adults' experience, we may state that the findings confirm the subjectivity of one's experience, as proposed in the theoretical part of this study (see chapter 3.1.1); and consequently, support the assumption about one's influence on the classification of the experience. Hence, the experience from the tour might belong to any realm proposed by Pine & Gilmore (1998), depending on each participant of the tour. In accordance with Gram (2005), the research indicates that children usually perceive as good, an experience encountered in the escapist realm. Likewise, the parents engaging with the tour can be classified into this category. On the other hand, other adults would belong to the non-event or aesthetic realm, as proposed by Gram (2005). At the same time, we may argue that by means of the concept, the producer wants to push the visitors into the escapist realm where, as proposed by Gram (2005) and confirmed by this study, the good family experience may be encountered.

Given the engaging character of the tours, they may enhance the immersion into the environment and facilitate entering the state of the flow, which is considered as having a good experience, as introduced by Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre (1989). However, not all the participants engage with the tour nor achieve the immersion into the settings. Consequently, we may argue that they do not encounter the flow, or at least not during the whole tour. E.g.: One older boy gets angry during the tour because he did not know the right answer on the posed question - the challenge exceeded his skills. On the other hand, some tasks are too easy for older children or adults: their skills exceeded the challenge and they might feel bored.

In addition, the tours can facilitate the creation of memorable experiences by engaging multiple senses, as suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1998). For instance, a small boy appreciated the chairs in the dining room: "*Wow, they are so soft*." Indeed, engaging human senses may increase the probability of memorizing an experience. This argument is supported by the conducted interviews, as the participants were revealing their previous experiences which were often sensory.

In line with Quan & Wang (2004), the experience is formed by peak and supporting one. The peak experience may be identified with the main motivation of the travel, as reflected in the quotes below.

> "*We've already been here but we did not manage to go for the tour and as we knew it was for children, we came back because of our daughter*." (Appendix 6 - Hm)

> "*It was because of the labyrinths and we've found out that they have also the specialized tours*." (Appendix 6 - Um1)

> "*Well, it is national holidays today so I wanted to go for the guided tour, for a trip to the labyrinths*." (Appendix 6 – Xs)

Thus, following Quan & Wang (2004) and drawing on the research, we may argue that the main triggers to visit Loučeň castle for the segment of families with children are the specialized guided tours and the labyrinths in the park.

In regards to the tours, the concept is evaluated by adults as fitting the needs of families with children:

> "*I think it is worth it to change the guided tours at castles so they would be more active. I liked the moment of the play, the tour was for families, that is good*." (Appendix 6 - Xf)

> "*I liked this tour a lot, it is unique, especially designed for children. Normally, they just ask something but it is a normal tour.*" (Appendix 6 – Im)

> "*I think it is like compact in this way, acceptable for both sides. Also the length is accurate. And parents, if they want they can get the information in another way*." (Appendix 6 – Nm)

These statements support Teixeira, et al. (2012) findings, and clearly suggest both the desirability and the competitive advantage represented by this specialized product. This argument can be strengthen by the fact that some participants consider the classical tours as a barrier for families with children when visiting castles (Appendix 6 – Nm), as explicitly formulated by participant Fm, who revealed that they "*would not even enter if it would be a normal guided tour*" (Appendix 6). Similar to the experience of the group (see chapter 4.1.2), the age of children was identified as one of the decisive factors when pursuing a good family experience. Thus, it could be argued that when having two or more children of different age, achieving a good experience may be more difficult, as children are not entertained at the same level.

In addition, as proposed by the academics (Mossberg 2007; Quan & Wang 2004), besides the peak experience, the supporting experiences and other aspects have an impact on the evaluation of the overall experience. On the ground of the findings and in accordance with Pine & Gilmore (1998), the value for money can be identified as an active factor in the experience assessment, as portrayed on the quote below.

> "*Well, how much was it? 500 CZK the family ticket, that is fine, that is accurate. And well, 50 minutes was accurate, not more. And it was interesting for children, that they could participate, I liked that.*" (Appendix 6 – Qf)

Drawing on this statement and the research, we may argue that visitors judge the satisfaction with the guided tour not only by what is gained from its consumption, but what was invested in its pursuit. Hence, not solely the money, but the time spent on the transport enters the process of experience evaluation (see chapter 3.3.1), as supported by the quotes below.

> "*It is one hour from us, but it is still fine.*" (Appendix 6 – Im)

> "*We have Loučeň relatively near and we've visited the other castles in the surroundings so we chose Loučeň* [...]" (Appendix 6 – Jm)

> "*And well, 50 minutes was accurate, not more* [...]" (Appendix 6 – Qf)

> "*It is 45 minutes by car* [...]" (Appendix 6 – Zf while having face expression that it is fine)

Based on these notions, we can argue that the participants did not have to spend a long time on travelling which appeared to be important when having children (Appendix 6). Thus, they

considered coming to Louceň castle convenient. Following this discussion, we could state that these participants gained a positive supporting experience, as introduced by Quan & Wang (2004). In regards to that and drawing on the theoretical discussion (see chapter 3.1.2), another supporting experience can emerge from the consumption in the restaurant or other shops present in the area of the castle. In relation to that, participant Uf1 commented:

> "*Here, I would not come because of the restaurant and I evaluate the place also by the restaurant. So they could have some seasonal or king meals.*" (Appendix 6)

This quote suggests that he acquired negative supporting experience which may have, in accordance with Mossberg (2007), influenced the assessment of the overall experience.

Examining the experience from the guided tours from the perspective of the hermeneutic circle (Ek, et al. 2008; Larsen 2007), we may argue that the acquired on-line experience in general meets or exceeds the expectations of the participants, as the reactions during the tours are mainly positive, and moreover, the participants of the interviews evaluated the tours as good, very good or enjoyable, as illustrated in the analysis of the actual experience. This argument confirms the findings of Tung & Ritchie (2011) and Vittersø, et al. (2000) related to the experience evaluation. The memories cannot be studied, as the research was conducted during and immediately after the tours.

In addition, the acquisition of a good experience and the satisfaction with the tour might be identified in the fact that the majority of the participants, both children and adults, revealed in the interviews that they would recommend visiting Louceň castle to other families with children, confirming Carr's (2006) conclusions.

> "*We recommend it as much as we can, especially among families with children.*" (Appendix 6 - Em)

> "*Yeah, we recommend it, we send photos as for instance today we could take pics in the dining room, or over FB, we spread the info* [...]." (Appendix 6 – Jm)

> "*Definitely, we would recommend it, the castles are today more accessible, our children would not stand the classic tours and* [...]." (Appendix 6 – Of)

Furthermore, some visitors noted that they actually came on recommendation or are revisiting the castle, for instance, participant Vf1 said: "*As we came back, we really like it in here*" (Appendix 6).

> *"Yes, well, friend of mine recommended it me visiting the castle about two years when he visited it with his family and liked it. It is about 110 km, but whatever."* (Appendix 6 - Pf)

This particular family visited Loučeň castle in spite of the longer distance which may only support the power of the word of mouth. Moreover, based on the following quote, it could be argued that Loučeň castle is generally considered as an attraction suitable for families with children.

> *"Definitely, it is spreading among families with children* [...]" (Appendix 6 – Zf)

Based on this study, it could be argued that the specialized guided tours facilitate all main motives sought by families while being on holidays – entertaining, education and togetherness (Gram 2005). Hence, they let families spend time in the same engaging environment while giving them many opportunities for interaction and acquisition of shared experience.

Having analyzed the concept of the specialized tours and the experience acquired from these, the focus is now fully given to the suggestions for improvements of the concept and the environment of Loučeň castle in general.

4.3 Suggestions for improvements

The analysis chapter has already briefly mentioned some proposals for making the concept of the tours and the environment more appealing to the visitors. These are further evolved in this section, together with other suggestions emerging from the findings.

In regards to the concept of the tours, it was suggested (Appendix 6 – Im, Sf, Tfr) to introduce some contest or an 'umbrella task' in the very beginning of the tour to keep a stable level of children's attention all along the tour. This is already applied in the White Lady tour, thus, it could be adopted also in the children tours. Moreover, the particular tasks of the contest should vary in every room. Apart from answering questions or searching for things, children could "*draw something like castle or princess*" and then receive "*some sweets for it*" (Appendix 6 - Im). Furthermore, making the setting of the tours more interactive and attractive for children was proposed (see below). However, having changed the setting dramatically might result in losing the adult visitors (Appendix 5).

> *"Or in the music room if they would have at every chair some instrument and the children could play something."* (Appendix 6 – Rm)

"Maybe they could try the dress or a wig." (Appendix 6 - Tm)

"Maybe if they could touch more things, you know, like some furry." (Appendix 6 - Æm)

When implementing these suggestions, the children's desires would be addressed and the place would remain almost unchanged and yet attractive for adults, who might be as well interested in the raised level of interaction.

Furthermore, visitors would appreciate meeting more historical or mystical figures during the tours:

"[...] if there would be the White lady passing by and disappearing again, that would be nice." (Appendix 6 - Hf)

"[...] it would be nice to meet for instance the princess when the white lady was talking about her." (Appendix 6 - Md)

Implementing this proposal could make the castle more alive while enhancing the edutaining image. However, the issue of the additional costs of such a service would have to be considered. Thus, applying this idea would probably raise the price of the guided tour.

Referring to the characters, several participants regretted that they did not meet Alfons, the ghost of the dog. Participant Vf1 was disappointed that the dog *"did not scare them* [children]" (Appendix 6). Actually, some parents were imitating the dog in the dark hallway (Appendix 4). Thus, it could be proposed to install some audio system (barking) or lights on the wall (dog's eyes) to please the visitors and enhance their experience. In addition, the memorability of the experience may be increased by giving the children some souvenir as a physical reminder of the guided tour, as proposed by participant Åfr (Appendix 6) in accordance with Pine & Gilmore's (1998).

In regards to the groups, lowering the maximum limit of participants in one tour may be suggested. This might result in more intense interaction between the guide and the participants. Moreover, each participant would have the chance to hear guide's oral presentation. Hence, more tours with smaller groups could be conducted. Moreover, as discussed (see chapter 4.3), some inconveniences could emerge from the inconsistence of the group - children of different age. Participant Tfr (Appendix 6) proposed splitting the young participants into some age categories in order to address better their specific needs. Based on

the research, this may be considered as a good idea. However, when looking at this notion from a practical point of view, its application seems very difficult as assuring the attendance in every age group is very unlikely.

On the grounds of the findings, it could be suggested to modify the proposed age of children for the participation in the children tour. Indeed, the very young children are generally not able to keep attention during the whole tour and sometimes disturb the other participants. However, it very much depends on their background and individual characteristics. Thus, the final decision about the participation will be always left for their parents.

In relation to the supporting experiences, the offer of the restaurant might be innovated by cooking some seasonal or themed meals while keeping the children menu. In addition, as the labyrinths were identified as an important trigger for the visit, a new one could be introduced to increase the likelihood of castle's revisiting.

Applying the theoretical background, the foregoing chapter has analyzed the collected data about the specialized guided tours at Loučeň castle and the experience acquired by their participants. These findings are used in the next chapter for the formulation of the conclusions.

5 Conclusions

Having analyzed the collected data, I will now draw conclusions underlining the relation of the findings to the problem formulation, and their significance to the research. This study aimed to reveal the characteristics of the concept of the specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle. Furthermore, it aspired to reveal how these tours are perceived and experienced by their target market. Moreover, the study strived to examine the similarities/differences between adults and children in terms of their experiences of the tours. In general, this study aimed to contribute to the existing literature since both of its main themes – the concept of the tours and the experience of the families, are under-researched in the Czech Republic.

This chapter presents the final conclusions and recommendations following from this study. It is divided into three sections. First, the problem formulation is addressed. Second, the contribution to current research and suggestions for further research are provided. Third, the implications for the marketers are presented.

5.1 How are specialized guided tours for families with children at Loučeň castle perceived by its target market, and how can they be defined?

In order to answer the problem formulation and better address the particular issues mentioned in it, I have formulated three research questions that are answered below. Thereafter, the focus is given back to the problem formulation itself.

5.1.1 The characteristics of the concept

This study aimed to characterize the concept of the specialized guided tours for families with children conducted at Loučeň castle. No specific literature on the guided tours at castles has been found, hence, the studies examining other cultural attractions were used. Based on the theoretical framework, it was assumed that the guided tours at Loučeň castle adopt the edutaining approach, which mixes education with entertainment in order to enable (co-)creation of unique and meaningful experiences. The components forming the environment of the tours, and affecting both the behaviour and consequently the nature of the experience, were as follows: the physical setting, actor and audience. In addition, the need for leaving the visitors some space to co-create their experience from the provided product or service was identified. Therefore, the marketer should design the product/service/experience while keeping in mind consumers' needs and wishes for the purpose of facilitating them good experiences.

The findings clearly support the classification of the specialized tours at Louceň castle under the edutainment heading. They attempt to communicate the story of the Thurn-Taxis family (the theme), and other related information in an interactive, engaging (posing questions, giving tasks) and enjoyable way, while keeping the balance between education and entertainment. In relation to the information, the research shows that the concept is mainly based on inciting curiosity, which could capture children's attention, entertain them and, at the same time, provide new knowledge. The tours make use of some typical edutaining principles, including theatrical aspects, or a journey to the past. In addition, elements of surprise, mystery and engagement of multiple senses at once are integrated into the concept and support the positive effects of the edutaining approach.

All components of the environment are influential on the process of experience formation. Thus, the ones manageable by the provider have to transmit a coherent message consistent with the theme. Louceň castle has created a supportive environment for families with children. An example of this is the positive evaluation of the labyrinths, which appeared to be one of the main triggers to visit the castle, encountered in the castle's park, along with the guides who were praised for their children-tailored approach. Actually, it is very likely that the labyrinths attract more people than the tours, as many visitors enter only the park. The guide, understood by means of the overall appearance (costume) and approach (consistence with the theme, the way of communicating information), was recognized as not only the mediator of the information, but also of the experience. The costume enhanced the impression of being in the past and became a positive visual cue. Hence, we may state that the environment at Louceň castle is quite approachable and enhances the likelihood of visitor interaction. Indeed, a high level of interactions between the visitors themselves and with the other components of the environment was noted, resulting in the experience co-creation, as addressed below. In fact, the audience and its characteristics, such as size and composition, affected the nature of the acquired experience. However, the influence of the other members of the group on one's own experience was not revealed in the interviews. Nevertheless, it was observed in accordance with the theories. The findings illustrate that not only these components influence the experience of the guided tours, but also the personal characteristics of the individual visitors, as presented in the theories. This is discussed in the next section.

Following the above stated, the research reveals that the guided tours establish a stable platform with their concept, where the visitors can co-create their experiences through the interactive nature of the tours. Hence, the concept of the tours is pre-designed in a way to

please the visitors; certain types of reactions are expected, based on the marketers' experience in the field. Thus, it seems the guide, who serves as a mediator and facilitator of the information and experience, takes visitors on a journey to the past, where they can uncover the Thurn-Taxis story. The engaging concept of the tours leaves them space to explore the castle and co-create the experience in their desired way. In addition, the interactive concept of the tours sets good conditions for shared experiences among the members of the group, and among family members in particular.

Having characterized the concept of the specialized guided tours, the focus is now given to the experience of families with children.

5.1.2 The experience of the visitors

This section addresses the second and third research questions, concerned with the experience of the families with children, considering them both as units and each of its members individually (focusing on the differences/similarities between children and adults). These two segments are generally characterized by different needs, perceptions, behaviour and reactions, which only supports the general concept of experience as being an inherently subjective phenomenon influenced by one's background, mood, expectations and additional factors. Therefore, the achievement of a good family experience is a challenging task. However, as mentioned in the previous section, shared experiences may emerge.

The main components of holidays sought by families with children were identified as entertainment, education and togetherness. Children were assumed to be in pursuit of active vacations with sensory experiences, letting them step into a different world, which would be classified in the escapist realm. In contrast, adults were labelled as being more passive, pursuing mainly relaxation, belonging to aesthetic or non-event realm. Hence, as suggested by the theories, the interactive nature of the tours is more likely to be appealing for children than for adults. However, this is not fully confirmed, as some parents pursue the same engaging activities as children.

In line with the theoretical frame, the research confirms that the tours are more dedicated to children than adults; that is, the questions, tasks and the way of presenting the information are tailored to children. However, given the experience's subjectivity, not all the children acquire a pleasant experience from the guided tours. Nevertheless, the majority of children enjoy the possibility of active participation in the tour as well as the sensory experiences, which enrich

the nature of the overall experience. In addition, the research underlines the influence of the mystery element in the tour as a stimulus for memorable experience.

Some parents may be characterized in the same vein. That is, they are keen on participating in the activities to the same, or even greater, extent as the children, since it brings them back to their childhood. Nevertheless, others keep their distance from the tour, either enjoying the time when their children are being entertained, to explore the castle in their own way, or simply wait until the end of the tour. Therefore, it cannot be generalized if the tours are enjoyed more by children or adults.

On the ground of the research, we can state that parents usually identify their needs with the needs of their children, which makes it more likely that this concept of the tours is well designed for families with children. Indeed, it offers all the main aspects sought by families while on vacation – entertainment, education and togetherness. Assuring these three conditions may contribute to the formation and acquisition of shared experience, with an implied added value in the sociality of the tour, leading to a good family experience. However, at the same time, the concept of the tours facilitates the togetherness paradox, separating either physically or mentally the family members.

This study has revealed some patterns in regards to the reactions and experience of the visitors. The visitors usually react positively on surprising and mystery stimulus. Moreover, the majority of visitors are keen on participation in the tour by answering the questions posed by the guide or fulfilling the given tasks. This interaction may enhance the immersion into the settings and cause the visitor to enter the state of flow, thus acquiring a good experience; this is understood differently by each individual.

When evaluating the guided tours, the experience hermeneutic circle emerged to be active. The visitors compared their actual experience with their expectations, evaluating it on a basis of previous experience. Some visitors lacking previous experience with similar products felt unable to judge the experience. However, drawing on the likelihood of recommendation of the tours to other families with children, the acquired experience can be considered as pleasurable. Otherwise, it would not have been recommended.

5.1.3 Summary

It can be stated that the concept of the tours as such addresses well the needs of its target market – families with children. Hence, it offers the possibility of acquiring a shared

experience, enriched with new knowledge, communicated in an entertaining way. Even though it focuses more on children than adults, it is still well perceived by the families, as the majority of adults identify their needs with the needs of their children. Moreover, addressing the needs of a young audience may contribute to establishing a positive relationship to visiting cultural attractions, which is certainly a good effect, as the children will be the future tourists making choices based on their background.

Indeed, the concept of the specialized tours is due to the adoption of the edutaining approach and inclusion of other mentioned aspects different from the classical tours conducted at castles in the Czech Republic. This difference is understood in terms of it being tailored to the needs of families with children, making the castle more accessible to a younger audience. This is highly appreciated by the visitors who identified the classical tours as an obstacle for visiting castles for families with children. Therefore, it seems the guided tours at Loučeň castle carry out well their aim of attracting families with children and providing them with enjoyable experiences, which visitors consider as being worth the price, understood not only by means of money, but of all the costs associated with the experience. However, they can never satisfy the needs of all the visitors, given the various factors in the process of experience co-creation and evaluation.

In addition, the findings suggest that these tours may serve as a good means of differentiation for Loučeň castle, and represent a competitive advantage on the tourism market. Hence, the concept of the tours at Loučeň castle may be "*the direction for the sites to attract visitors*" (Appendix 5). Nevertheless, further research in this area with a focus on edutainment is still needed, as formulated by Hertzman, et al. (2008).

Thus, having presented the conclusions of this study in relation to the problem formulation and research questions, the contribution to the present research and suggestions for further examination are presented in the following chapter.

5.2 Contribution to research and suggestions for further research

This study contributes to two under-researched areas: specialized guided tours for families with children at castles in the Czech Republic, and the experience of individual family members, both children and adults, participating in the tours. Moreover, this study examined the experiences of families with children not only from the perspective of adults, but also from the children's points of view, addressing a gap in the research and adding new insight into the area concerned with their needs and wishes, as directly formulated by them. In

addition, the findings point out the lack of specialized products for families with children within the field of cultural tourism, and visiting castles and chateaux in particular.

Hence, the research characterizes the concept of the guided tours which might be suitable for families with children and provide them with a good experience. It has been proven in the academic literature that better understanding of visitors' experiences can facilitate and inspire marketing decisions; these implications are discussed in the next section (see chapter 5.3).

This research may be a starting point for further research; hence, suggestions for further research, based on the limitations of this study and the acquired knowledge, are provided in the following.

First, the research might be conducted in the peak season and for a longer period of time, generating a larger body of collected data, resulting in stronger evidence. Second, the research might include a comparison of the experiences of the specialized and normal guided tours, revealing their similarities/differences and their influence on visitors' experiences. Third, the research might contrast the specialized guided tours at Loučeň castle with some other castle offering a similar product, providing more information about concepts suitable for families with children. In regards to that, the comparison might be done with a foreign case, contrasting national and international approaches to families with children; or it might study, for instance, the role of cultural background in perceiving certain elements of the tours. Fifth, the whole hermeneutic circle of the experience including expectations, on-line experience and memories might be an interesting object of study, providing an overall image of the effects of the specialized guided tours on the visitors. Sixth, a gender study might be conducted examining the experiences of men and women, acquired in the specialized guided tours. Finally, various studies focusing in detail on the influence of the particular components of the tours (physical setting, guide, audience) could be conducted, giving more insight into this issue.

Indeed, conducting the suggested studies could bring interesting insight into the perception of the specialized products, which may serve as a good source of information for their improvement by the providers, and to tailor them to the needs of the target segment.

5.3 Suggestions for marketers

Based on the research, one can argue that the concept of the tours at Loučeň castle is very popular with the visitors, increases its attractiveness, visitation, and consequently affects

favourably the income of the castle. Hence, the success of the specialized tours at Loučeň castle may inspire other castles in the Czech Republic and even abroad. The marketers of similar sites shall consider implementing concepts like these in order to increase the attractiveness, visitation and income of their particular site. Furthermore, if well managed, such a concept might address the issue of seasonality at the sites, as it offers something unique and tailored, attracting a particular segment of visitors. However, the mere fact of implementing this concept would not be sufficient, as it is also necessary to offer customers new things in order to keep them coming back. Thus, the need for continuous innovation should not be forgotten when striving to succeed in the tourism market.

6 Bibliography

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Appendix 1 – Observations guide

- environment
    - o physical setting, audience, actor
- observing both individuals and the group as a unit
- differences/similarities between children and adults
- interactions
    - o among group members
    - o with the guide
    - o with the settings
    - o with the story
    - o with the props
- involvement
- reactions
- emotions
- body language

Appendix 2 – Interview guide for Mrs Šrámková

Themes:

- the inspiration for the specialized tours
- the characteristics of the concept
- the overall offer of the castle
- the evolution of the concept and the offer

Questions:

1. What was the impulse for implementing these specialized tours and where did you got inspired?
2. What were you expecting from these tours? How did your expectations meet the reality?
3. When was the first guided tour? How has the concept developed?
4. What are the most important aspect of the tour? The story, guide, costume...
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this concept?
6. Are you trying to protect the concept?
7. Have you heard about edutainment?
8. Would you rather go to specialized or classic tour? Why?
9. Do you think that the visitors learn something during the guided tour of is it just for fun?
10. Do you have any special requirements when choosing the guides?
11. From the point of view of the guide – is it more entertaining/difficult?
12. Are you planning some innovations?

Appendix 3 – Interview guide for visitors

Themes:

- previous experience
- evaluation of the guided tour and its components
- suggestions for improvements

Questions:

1. How often do you visit castles?
2. Have you visited any other castles offering specialized guided tour?
3. What did you like the most about the tour?
4. What did you like the least?
5. How would you describe the tour to someone who doesn't know it?
6. Do you think it is a good idea to offer such a tour?
7. Are you now going to be more likely to visit a castle offering such a tour? Are you gonna search before going there?
8. Where are you from? How many hours are you willing to travel to have such an experience?
9. Would you visit the tour without your children? Would you have any barriers to do so?
10. Did you have fun?
11. Do you remember some historical facts? Do you have the feeling that you have learned something? Can you give some examples?
12. Do you think these tours build in children good relationship to castles and culture in general? How?
13. Would you have any suggestions how to make the tours better? More suitable for families with children?

Appendix 4 – Field notes

- **physical setting**
  - **outside**
    - castle is surrounded by park with 11labyrinths
    - a restaurant for visitors with a basic offer of meals and drinks (frequently visited by families with children)
    - some small stalls with snacks and refreshments
    - table with the schedule of the tours by the entrance
  - **inside**
    - nicely decorated interiors of the castle
    - flowers in vases, Easter decoration
    - no ropes, access to almost all parts of the exposition
    - sign not to touch things
    - curiosities brought from journeys by the Thurn-Taxis family

- **guide**
  - several guides were observed
    - very much depends on their experience – when not experienced they are nervous
    - each of them has a specific way of conducting the tour – highlights other facts, treats the visitors a differently
  - has a costume and plays the character of princess, White Lady, Prince, etc
  - the guide speaks in the first person playing the particular character
  - welcoming quote
    - *"Welcome at Loučeň castle, I'm princess Karolína and I will be your guide. Today, we are gonna talk about the life of Prince Alexander and Princess Marie Thurn-Taxis. Follow me and after climbing the stairs we step into the time when the prince with princess lived here."*
  - poses many questions in order to engage the visitors, esp. children
    - *What is this animal?*
    - *What was the name of the prince/princess?*
    - *What did they use for dealing with fire?*
    - *Where is annually held an important horse race?*
    - *"Prince, do you play football? And do you know where the first football team was formed in the Czech Republic?"*
    - *"Princess, do you know any Czech composer?"*
    - asks about the way you fill out an envelope and what do you need and then tells children that they would have been great postmen
  - eye contact mainly with children
  - in the beginning of the tour the guide says: "No worries, today it is not gonna be about boring facts and so on, but about a life of a prince and princess..."

- o sometimes uses words from the period of the time, but also terms (some of them does not have to be known by children)
- o talks about not knowing taxi, modern phone or new mail boxes when showing the old ones, visitors usually laugh about these notions
  - ▪ *"I don't know taxis, but the visitors have told me..."*
  - ▪ *"I would not know how to use the modern tools, but ..."*
  - ▪ *Who has ever seen that? To have the North up and the South down on the map? Well, you are maybe used to it, but in my time ..."*
- o repeats the basic facts about the people who used to live at the castle to make visitors (children) to memorize them better and in the end of the tour asks about them (names of prince and princess, their favourite animals, the animal in the family sign) and gives children some sweets for their attention
- o in every room the guide gives some cues for what is going to happen next – keeping the attention and raising the interest
- o gives children tasks: find some animal – tiger, turtle, cat, dog, eagle (then explains Empire style); play the piano; sing a song; count books; remember and repeat the whole name of princess Marie (right before starting she asks if they have a good memory)
- o talks about legends and some mystery figures (White Lady, dog Alfons, ghost evocation)
- o calls children as princes and princesses
- o explains electricity and other inventions in an entertaining way
- o aims to engage children and relate the presentation to them
  - ▪ when talking about the sugar factory founded by the Thurn-Taxis family the guide comments on prince's affection for the sweets and ask children if they like sweets as well
  - ▪ *"Do you have cats at home? And are they on your bed? Well, prince Alexander loved cats, so let's go and check if they are still in his room."*
  - ▪ *"Have you brought a piano with you, princess? Probably not, right? But you know, princess Maria used to do it, because it was a custom at her time."*
- o tries to make an entertainment presentation
  - ▪ *"I will show you the first football team, but you have to promise me that you would not laugh at them, because they look a bit like prisoners or sailors."*
- **visitors**
  - o **the amount and composition of the group**
    - ▪ 2 visitors – the guide asks the whole tour this one child and the interaction with the group is missing, the visitors seems a bit nervous
    - ▪ 44 visitors – the rooms are too small and the ones in the back can't hear the guide, the visitors get lost before entering the library (there is a confusing place where the guide goes to two rooms and then back)
    - ▪ children of different ages react differently
  - o **children**

- follow the guide, their parents stay in the back
- are with their parents
- some children are very active and eager to participate, some say the answer very quietly not attracting the attention, others are passive (shy, bored, tired...)
- in general, they seem to be entertained
- one boy is angry when he doesn't know the right answer on the posed question when solving the crossword in the White Lady tour
- very young children can't keep their attention
- different reactions on particular tasks, questions, impulses
  - the mystery dog Alfons (some do not care, some are scared)
  - searching for animals (some get excited, some bored)
- **adults**
  - some skip children in answering questions, eager to participate
    - *"Let them answer!"* one wife when her husband was answering a question
  - some adults are using their phones and doing other things and not listening the guide
  - they are checking if they children are entertained (asking them or just examining from their own point of view)
- **interaction visitor – environment**
  - visitors are surprised and pleased when they can sit down on the chairs in the dining room and take pictures
    - "That's the first time ever I could sit on the chair at the castle." (adult visitor)
    - "Wow, the chairs are so soft!" (small boy)
  - when ghosts are mentioned some children are terrified, some are curious
    - they don't want to enter the dark hall where a ghost of dog Alfons lives and is waiting for the children who behave badly
    - a boy escapes from the entrance to the hallway
      - "Wait, prince, where are you going?" says the guide
    - some children go only with their parents
    - some parents are joking – sending the children and saying with and ironic tone – "Go, we will wait here."
    - some parents are imitating the ghost of the dog to scare children
  - when children see the cats on prince's bed they are usually pleased
    - "Mum, the cats are beautiful, aren't they? I would like to have such a cat at home, but alive" said a small girl
  - visitors deliberately touch decorations and take pictures (this is allowed only in the dining room)
- **interaction visitor – guide**
  - visitors are answering/asking questions and fulfilling given tasks
    - And the prince used to sleep with a teddy bear?
    - Where are they buried?

- o   visitors appreciate the costumes – sparkling eyes when they see the princess or the white lady
    - ▪   "Mum, look at the dress!" says a girl
    - ▪   "Mum, I wish to have such a dress!" says a small girl
    - ▪   "Look at it! It is so pretty!" says a young girl
  - o   by a direct eye contact and questioning the guide attempts to engage all the children to the tour
  - o   one conversation after which everyone is laughing -> good atmosphere in the group
    - ▪   Guide: "Do you know any Czech composer?"
    - ▪   Girl: "Bedřich Smetana."
    - ▪   Guide: "You've learned about him at school:"
    - ▪   Girl: "No, I've seen him at the cemetery."
  - o   reciprocity
    - ▪   visitors are attentive, like the presentation -> the guide gets more confident and increases the performance -> visitors get more pleased and show their gratitude -> guide feels honoured
- **interaction visitor – visitor**
  - o   when a question is asked
    - ▪   children consult the answer with their parents
    - ▪   parents whisper the right answer to children
    - ▪   parents ask their children
      - •   "So what we try?" and the boy answers "D"
  - o   when the answer/question is funny the whole group is laughing -> pleasant atmosphere
  - o   visitors smile at each other, giggle, clap when someone plays the piano, laugh about the questions from the kids
  - o   generally, the visitors seem to be relaxed
  - o   parents play the story with the guide
    - ▪   "*We've gotta hurry, princess Caroline is yet over there.*" mum saying to a small girl when being behind the tour
    - ▪   "*Well, you better start counting.*" father to his daughter when children are asked to count the books in the library
  - o   children want to follow the guide
    - ▪   "*Mum, come, let's go to the library*" says a small girl while taking her mum by hand and leading her to the library
  - o   some children are too active – shout and ask a question in every room -> visitors silently talk to their relatives after such a situation happens
  - o   when children answer the question their parents often praise them
  - o   small conversation – togetherness paradox – parents are enjoying the time on their own
    - ▪   "*Where are your children?*"
    - ▪   "*I don't know, somewhere in the front...*"
- o   crossword solving in the White Lady tour – families solve it together

Appendix 5 – Interview with Mrs Šrámková (Shortened version)

Why did you implement the specialized guided tours for children and how you came up with the concept?

Well, we wanted to do tours comprehensible for children from the very beginning, we wanted to tell stories about the life at the castle and had a costumed guide, only the chamberlain at that time. We did not wanna say: "This is dresser from 17th century and this is this and this is that"; because the historical value of the interiors is not as high as at the other castles. Then, we found out that if we want to target children, we have to tell them the same story in a bit different way, because they don't want so many historical data as adults. However, we realized the need to change the chamberlain for someone more appealing to children, so we employed princess and white lady. Thus, we divided the guided tours and made a daily schedule with tours for adults and children enabling people to choose what suits them. So the visitors themselves brought us to that idea.

I was impressed that visitors can sit down in the dining room, I haven't seen that before.

Yes, you know, it is not historical furniture, so we can do it. Of course, we have some precious pieces of furniture as well, but not the chairs. We wanted to have it this way from the very beginning. At our castle you can sit anywhere. I always let people sit down in the dining room and the musical cabinet. People like to sit down and children are very keen on these active parts of the guided tours.

Were you personally designing the tour? Where did you got inspired?

I think we were the first in the Czech Republic offering specialized guided tours for children as a part of the basic offer. There were castle having something for children maybe 3 times during the season, but nothing regular. And nowadays? Every other castle has these tours, well, not every other but many of them and the number is growing.

Are you protecting the concept?

That is impossible, I know we were the first having White lady as a guide and now? She is guiding almost everywhere. But, on the other hand, why not? If people get used to it and like being guided by White lady... then they will go to another castle to experience it again.

Yes, it is building the relationship, isn't it?

Yeah, of course.

What are the most important aspects of the tour? The costume, guide, story?

Everything together. The guide has to be a person who wants to act as someone else which is not for everyone, but you can find such a people. Some people are capable of memorizing and repeating the historical data, but cannot play the role of some figure. Our guides are actors. They have to play their role and say: "I'm princess, I'm servant and I'm White lady". The guides have to have a good costume, so people would believe you really are the personage you are pretending to be. It has to be authentic. And then you have to have a coherent story, with a beginning and end, because if there is no sense in the story, it is for nothing and it is boring.

Great, and would you tell me what are the pros and cons of these specialized tours?

I'm gonna answer you with a question. What is the advantage of offering kids menu in the restaurant? I mean, you know, it is a specialized product. So parents know that it is suitable for children and when they buy it, everyone is gonna be happy. So I think it is the same, basically, you give people what they want, that is the biggest advantage.. And disadvantage? If an adult goes to such a tour, he can be disappointed, but the kid is going to be happy. And so, parents actually consume the meal with their children and we offered them not to go. But they said: "We are interested as well, we want to go". However, if you would have only meals for children, you might lose the adults. Nevertheless, sometimes we have even adults without children attending these tours.

Are you trying to educate or entertain by the guided tours?

There is a new concept - edutainment. I've found it in some magazine and when I read what it means I was like: "That is exactly what we do!" The classical guided tours where the guide is like a teacher, walking book with historical data - who lived at the castle, who is on the picture and so on – that is pure education, and people do not get anything from it. On the other hand, there are purely entertaining concepts, only about fun without the added value of some new knowledge. What do you get to know in Disneyland? You already know Mickey Mouse, so do they tell you that the grass is green or the sun rises on the east? So I think it is about delivering an experience in an entertaining form (the guide in the costume), but still with the educational part, so that the visitor gets some new knowledge. When you have guided tours for children, you have to entertain them so they like going to castles and say: "Wow, mum, the princess had such a nice dress!" or "We could sit down in the princess dining room!", "I could play the piano". We are gaining the young visitors by these means and building in them the relationship to castles and chateaux. So I think edutainment is the direction the cultural attraction may follow in order to attract visitors. I just think it is unfortunate, when it is about pure entertainment because the visitor does not get any knowledge.

I'm very happy you've mentioned it, because I wanted to ask you about this concept. I think there is a huge potential in it and in the project Thirteenth Chamber based on it.

Well, when you wrote me about your thesis, I was happy that someone is going to research this topic. I think it is necessary to talk about it and present it to people so they can make their own opinion and find out that it might be the way to attract visitors. The problem at public castles is that their owner National Heritage Institute is not used to the guided tours in this way. But they are going to learn it, or at least some of their sites. I have to admit that they did a good job by opening the castles to public, even though with guided tours repeating just the historical data. Thus, we are pretty unique with the number of historical sites accessible for public. In general, we like holidays in the Czech Republic and visiting castles and chateaux is on the top of the list when doing some survey. Nevertheless, the experience is missing, people go to castles such as Hluboká nad Vltavou or Český Krumlov, and well it is nice, but afterwards nobody knows what the guide was talking about. But it is possible to make it better, more entertaining...Well, you know, what is competition? Is it only other castles and chateaux? No, it is not! It is anyone who offers leisure time activities for our target segment, families with children. So, aqua parks, zoological gardens, shopping centres. When our competition offers entertaining experience, full of colours, sounds and so on...then the classical tours are sort of black and white and boring...so there is no other

way. We have to entertain people, make their eyes sparkle and make them say: "That was good." They have to see that it was worth paying for these experiences.

Could you briefly present The Thirteenth Chamber project?

So, the concept was developed here at Loučeň. We were already doing our tours with White lady, I think like 2 years. We wanted to implement the concept to other cultural sites and see if people would like it and go to guided tours with mysterious figure. There was one strict requirement - the figure had to have some relation to the site, not just any no-name thing, but something from history or legends. So, the costume, then crossword [the active part of the tour, people are trying to solve it during the tour, the guide gives them questions and hints] *and collection of keys* [to open the chamber]. *Thus, we made a manual how to make these tours and search for partners. And people like it! They come. It is the third year now and from the beginning of March we have people asking for these tours.*

So you think it works.

I don't think so, I know it. We monitor it very carefully. The increase from 2012 to 2013 is over 20% in average, so it can be 1,02% like here at Loučeň or even 48% at some other site. You know, the number of visitors at cultural sites is in general dropping but this concept managed to generate new demand.

Are you preparing some innovations?

We have to innovate! You know, we had a vision. I wanted every Czech to come three times to Loučeň castle. Once as a kid, then as a parent with children and then as a grandparent with grandchildren and that was my motto. And they come even more frequently! When you want someone to come more times, you have to offer something special, something new what they haven't seen yet. It is like theatre, you go there more times for a different play. We have special tours for special events, such as Mother's Day or Post festival. Right now I'm developing a project with Beata Rajská, fashion designer. And we have chocolate tours. It is a pity that the public castles are a bit behind; sometimes they have the ideas, but can't implement them given the lack of money or lack of interest from their bosses.

Appendix 6 – Interviews with visitors (Shortened versions)

1. **A Grandparents, mother and son 11 years (Nový Bor)**

- All of them liked the tour
    - It was great. (gm)
    - We had the White Lady tour and it was like less historical data and more curiosities. (m)
    - Very interesting (gf)
    - The concept is very good especially for kids. She gives them some tasks to entertain them and keep their attention and not leaves them space to disturb. We were not bored either, there was not space for that. We liked the most the labyrinths and the White lady." (gm)
- they would recommend the tour to their relatives and friends
- they want to participate in the 13th Chamber project

2. **B Father with daughter 5 years**

- "We especially seek for these tours, we go a lot to castles and chateaux, now we want to participate in the project of 13th chamber. We do it for her, to make the weekends more interesting as we do not have time during the week, so we want to compensate it."(f)
- Is it entertaining also for parents? "Yeah, totally, children say various things, they are interested, it is great." (f)
- "We like it, she likes it as well, it is not some targeted education." (f)
- "Today, it was very interesting. The princess was good. You know, generally, there are some old ladies at the castles who just tell the facts, but this was great, one of the best presentations we've had. "(f)
- the girl liked the princess, would like to be one as well and liked the most the legend about the ghost of the dog
- the girl was very active during the guided tour, she walked alone in the front of the tour, her father was in the back, she played piano

3. **C Mother, father, sons 7 and 12 years, daughter 4 years (Krabčice - Roudnice nad Labem)**

- "We visit castles when the guided tour is adequate, when the kids can make it. We did not used to go, because our daughter was too small, but know it is fine. " (m)
- "Yeah, I liked it today. The White Lady was nice, I wanna see her again." (d)
- How about the concept? *"I always say that when the kids can keep their attention the whole time then it is great. And usually they remember something. And I think for adults it is also better, definitely better than there is this painting and that king and so we go to the next room."* (m)
- "I liked the most that we could sit down in the dining room, you can't normally do that." (f)
- "Well, when the children can engage with the tour that is definitely better than just the pure presentation where they cannot keep the attention. It is great when they can interact, search for something." (m)
- the youngest girl was very small, but still, she looked that she liked it; the oldest son tried to be the best and was angry when he did not know the answer

4. **D Father, mother, two daughters 6 and ½ and 5 years (Prague)**

- "I liked, hmmm, I liked everything." (d) "Me too." (d)
- "Yeah, I liked it. It is very well done for children, very interesting concept. I think it can catch their attention much better than the normal tour with pure presentation. This concept is good for motivation for children. It is well thought and designed." (f)
- "We do not usually go to castles, it was just an idea today." (f)
- "It was not too long, without many detailed information, that what suits me." (m)
- "I remember more the impression than the information" (m)
- "For me three things – post, football team and the Taxis obstacle. I think I would probably forget that they have 7 500 books in the library." (f)
- "They were using baskets for the fire." (d)
- "I think that there is an economic barrier for some families, it is expensive to go on a family trip. You know, instead of 1000 you spend now 1500 CZK and not everyone can afford that. But I think it is important because the presence is the history, the memories, the kids will have and they gain them at such places." (f)

5. **E Father, mother and two sons 7 (s1) and 15 (s2) years (Prague)**
- "Well, we were in Broumov, where we acquired information about the project and so we decided to participate, but we visit cultural attractions apart from that as well. Boys like it." (f)
- "Yeah, in general, I like visiting cultural attractions, I'm interested in it and this is something different." (s2)
- in comparison to the classical tours:
    o "It is more interesting for children when there is the mystery figure, children are amazed. Well, for us as well, we really liked the Dark Knight in Děčín. He was the best of what we've seen so far." (f)
    o "We like that we can access places which are not normally part of the classical tour, well, concretely in Děčin, the whole tour is underground where there is no tour standartly. And moreover, the kids get entertained, listed and we can look for what we like and enjoy it without being worried where they are and what they do." (m)
- "We are going to definitely continue on the other castles, we are just thinking where to open the 13th chamber." (f)
- "We recommend it as much as we can, especially among families with children." (m)
- do you think it is real? "Well, we did not think about it. But usually it is something from the history or legends, that is nice that there is not White lady everywhere." (m)
- "We would appreciate if there would be more castles and chateaux participating, because when we are done, then we have to go back to the reality. So it would be great if there would be more places." (f)

6. **F 2 families – Czech couple (Loučeň, Prague), family from Germany visiting Prague – three children 7, 4 and 2 years**
- "Well, we heard that Loučeň is good for children, we came mainly because of the labyrinths." (m)
- "We would not even enter if it would be a normal guided tour." (m)
- "I think it would be nice if there would be some crowns or toys for children." (fr)
- "I did not like it more than the normal tour." (m)

7. **G Father, mother, son and daughter 9 years (Prague)**
- "Well, we came because I know it here and I liked it and they have the labyrinths for children." (m)
- "It is our first castle from the 13th chamber project. I heard about it beforehand but just because friend of mine was working on its promotion. But we checked the details only yesterday." (m)
- "I liked it a lot." (d) "Me too." (s)
- What did you like the most?
    o "Hmm, I don't know, maybe the toilet." (d)
    o "Well, I was amazed by the library. It is my dream to have a big room full of books with one big armchair. But it was interesting in general. I liked the Oriental room. It is amazing how many nice items they've collected and are presenting when there was nothing after communism." (m)
- The concept
    o "Well, it is interesting for us as it is interesting for children. We liked it as well. And as we have the passports we are gonna continue to the other castle. We've just thought that there would be more places to choose from, because well, I'm not so keen on visiting some of them so it would be better to have wider range." (m)
- "We would definitely recommend it to our friends." (m)
- improvement – "Well, I think that adults can always find something for them, that there are the paintings and the things of daily use, that is great. It would be nice to see the children room, because they mentioned that there were three sons and we did not see the room, but I think it is in the other circuit. However, it would be definitely nice for the kids." (m)

8. **H Father, mother, daughter 4 a ¾ years (Prague)**
- "We've already been here but we did not manage to go for the tour and as we knew it was for children, we came back because of our daughter." (m)
- did you like it? "I liked the most the sweets." (d)
    o "I liked the most the library and that we could sit down in the dining room." (m)

- "Since we have children, we don't go a lot to castles, but we used to go a lot." (m)
- "But we are planning to start again with the tours for children. We liked it a lot at Chateau Radíč. I think there is a hole in the market, that there are few such a thing, that the coverage for this segment is not good." (f)
- improvements – "Maybe, if we would get something to eat in the dining room. Or if there would be the White lady passing by and disappearing again, that would be nice." (f)

9. I Mother and daughter 5 years (Třebechovice)

- "I heard about Loučeň and its programme for children. Moreover, there are not a lot of open castles in April and I wanted to find something new for the weekend. So I chose this because of my daughter. It is one hour from us, but it is still fine."
- "We've been to many castles in our surroundings, mainly places that have something for children – small zoo, park or other attraction." (m)
- "I liked this tour a lot, it is unique, especially designed for children. Normally, they just ask something but it is a normal tour. This was different and great." (m)
- "Certainly, I liked it. When my child is delighted I'm delighted too. They have it really well done for kind, just few notions about history, just the things children would like and can memorize and the whole approach is nice and well, infantile, but in a good sense." (m)
- The girl is nodding when asked if she liked the tour. She liked the most the dresses.
- "I would like to see the chocolate tour in here, but another day. I like it here a lot. I work in marketing and I like the way they do it here. They attract the families over the children, the castle is different by this." (m)
- "Well, they say it is from 3 years but I think that is too less, because they cannot keep the attention, it is too long for them. It was hard for my daughter as well, after half an hour she starts to get disturbed by anything. So I was glad that it took about 35 or 40 minutes. Moreover, it was changing, if we would were at one place, it would never work, but as we moved around the castle and the guide keeps their attention by some cues from one room to another, gives them tasks, they have to search for something, count and so on, it works. The interaction is ideal. I'm very glad that the castles have improved their marketing in this way. It is definitely because of money, but why not, if it gives joy to children and moreover, they can learn something new. They are gonna certainly remember something in the future. So I like it, it did not use to be like this. Furthermore, they could touch things, sit down and I could take pictures. That was awesome. It is not the only place but they have it here to the widest extent." (m)
- Improvement – "Definitely some play, or tasks. For instance to draw something like castle or princess and give them some sweets for it. And parents know that the guide takes care of the children, so they might offer separated programme for children and parents, because I would be interested in more information about the things in the castle but for her was great. Or some special programs for holidays. I like when the things are changing, that is the innovation." (m)

10. J Mother and son 12 years (Prague)

- "We have Loučeň relatively near and we've visited the other castles in the surroundings so we chose Loučeň now because of the project 13th chamber." (m)
- "It is interesting, the people are very nice and you can learn more than at the normal guided tours. I liked it a lot." (s)
- "Well, I think it is mainly curiosities, that it is not about the classic tour with historical data and furniture, that is another style. But I think that it is perfectly done for children, well educative. One has to well discover all the corners of the room in order to find some item which is great for children I think. I do the same in galleries, I ask children what painting they would like to have at home. So I like this concept." (m)
- improvement – "Well, I think i would have to think about it, but I think it depends on the particular cultural attraction, if it is castle or chateau. That is from our experience because it influences the interiors which you can see, so it is linked to the particular place. And to the tour. I'm not a regular visitor, I know a lot about history, so I would need more information, but for children it is well balanced, especially for the younger ones, they are interested in colours, animals and so on, but it is interesting also for adults who do not know a lot about history. It may attract them. And concretely

today, White lady at Loučeň was great, she was very nice and had a positive approach to children. So great." (m)

- "I would not change anything, I liked the most the map and library." (s)
- "Yeah, we recommend it, we send photos as for instance today we could take pics in the dining room, or over FB, we spread the info and recommend it." (m)

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11. K Father, mother, girl 6 years, boy 4 years (Kolín)
- "It is near for us. It is the first castle in the project and we will see about the others." (f)
- children say they liked it – the dressing room and white lady were the best for them.
- "I especially liked the guide, she was very nice. You know with kids it is always a risk, but she was not nervous. That makes it totally different, so I could relax as well. And kids could touch the furniture, there were no ropes and we could walk on the carpet." (m)
- "And we could sit down twice, that is great to get new energy, because it may get long and tiring." (f)
- they would recommend the tour
- improvement
    o "Definitely, it would be nice to get some sweets, haha, but maybe not for all the families. But it was nice when we met the other tour." (m) " I don't know if it was prepared or not, but it was well managed." (f) "It was good, because also the other guide had a costume, so we realized that this castle is different, that not only us we have the white lady, but also the others have costumes. So we might come for the evening tour with the ghosts." (m)

12. L Father, mother, 2 daughters 6 and 4 years (Slaný)
- "We were searching for something for our children, we came for the White lady, I found it on Slevomat. Well, mainly for the labyrinths." (m)
- children liked the tour
- "It was good that there were not so many information, just the right amount they can absorb." (f)

13. M Grandparents, granddaughter 8 and grandson 6 years (Prague)
- "We came because mum and dad got married here. I liked the most the music room." (gd)
- "I think it is good for children. We will continue because of the parents." (gm)
- "It would be nice to meet for instance the princess when the white lady was talking about her." (gd)

14. N Mother and son 8 years (Říčany)
- "It is relatively near. On the internet, we were searching where to go, and there we learned about the project 13th chamber. (m)
- "Yeah, I liked it was good for children." (m)
- "I liked the most the music room." (s)
- "Definitely, because they do not enjoy the classic tours. We do not visit castles often, exactly because of the classic tours, it needs to be combined always.
- Yeah, we would probably recommend it." (m)   "Yes."(s)
- "I think it is like compact in this way, acceptable for both sides. Also the length is accurate. And parents, if they want they can get the information in another way." (m)
- when asked the boy nodded that he liked the costume and that it made it for him more authentic

15. O Mother, father, daughter 5 years and son 3 years (Prague)
- How did you like the tour?
    o "A lot" (d) the boy was nodding
- Why did you come? Well, that there are the labyrinths and they were here with the kinder garden. (f)
- "We liked it a lot from the point of view that it was interesting and entertaining for children." (m)
- Do you think they learn something? "Well, I think so, well, not the boy but she, that she get to know about the castle and the life in a natural and entertaining way." (m)
- Definitely, we would recommend it, the castles are today more accessible, our children would not stand the classic tours and she likes to look how was the castle, how the people used to live. (f)
- Do you go often? Well, so so, we pretty much like it but it is not regular (f). But we were in Lednice, there was also a tour for children. (m)

- So do you go especially for these tours? Yes, in another case they would disturb. (m)
- "I liked the most everything." (d)
- the girl would recommend it to her friends

16. P Mother, Father, daughter (5 years) son 2 years (Slapy)
- Why did you come? "Because of the labyrinths, because of children, it is a different way to spend leisure time than running in forest." (f)
- Did you know about the tour for children? Yes, I read it on the internet but we decided about it only here." (m)
- Did you like it? "Yes, maybe would be better if she would have been older, she is 5 years, so from kinder garden, but anyways it was great for children. And the young one, I think he liked the chairs." (m)
- "The concept of the tour, for children easy, for adult well..." (m)
- "You know, you go there because of kids so they enjoy it." (f)
- "It was fine for listening, the princess was sympathetic." (m) "That's my part." (f).
- Would you recommend it? "Yes, well, friend of mine recommended it me visiting the castle about two years when he visited it with his family and liked it. It is about 110 km, but whatever." (f)
- improvement – "Well, it is difficult for us cause this is actually the first tour for children we've tried so we can't compare it." (f) "And you can't really compare it with the classic tours at other castles." (m) "I think that she caught their attention for a while." (f)
- the girl liked the tour and says that she remembers the thing but she is too shy to talk

17. Q Mother, father, daughter, two sons 8, 7 and 2 years (Prague)
- "Well, we came because she was here with school and liked it." (f)
- "I liked one teddy bear and did not have enough money for it." "But we are not hear because of that. Well, we are from Prague, so it is not far away, it is up to one hour. And we haven't been here. And we've checked the website and there was well described, that it is for children and about the labyrinths." (f)
- Did you like it? they are nodding, "When she gave us the sweets."(s)
- children remember information from the tour
- "It is well done for kids." (f)
- "Well, how much was it? 500 CZK the family ticket, that is fine, that is accurate. And well, 50 minutes was accurate, not more. And it was interesting for children, that they could participate, I liked that." (f)
    - o "I would like if there were sweets all along the tour." (s)
- improvements
    - o "Well, the only thing I think, it is good when it is interactive, when they can participate, they are active it is more interesting for them. You know a long speech is boring for them. Or that they could sit down and touch. I think that is better and more enjoyable for them and that they learn something. There has to be some animation. If it is only speech they lose their attention." (m)

18. R Mother, father, two sons 8 and 4 years (Prague)
- "We've seen it on the internet and we liked the offer of the tours for children. And also because of the labyrinths." (f)
- children liked the tour and remember some stuff from the tour when asked
- "We think, it was right accurate for children" (m)
- "Well, the length was also accurate for children. For me...well, as it was for them it was not for me." (f)
- "There were not information for adults." (m)
- they would recommend it both parents and their son
- "I think it was well done, short, so that children would not be overwhelmed. And the guide had a costume, that it was well tailored for children." (m)
- improvements
    - o "For me, everything was good." (s)
    - o "Well, something where they could actively participate..." (m)
    - o "Something they could do or draw..." (f)

- o "For instance a bow and arrows...[???] ... it was nice that they could sit at the table in the dining room. I consider that great." (m)
- o „Yeah, the chairs were good." (s)
- o "Or in the music room if they would have at every chair some instrument and the children could play something. Something to keep their attention." (m)

19. S Mother, father and two daughters 5 and 3 years (Prague)

- "Well, we started with Miraculum which is a partner site" (f)
- "But we also heard about it from our relatives so would have come anyways." (m)
- "We liked the tour. Well, I liked it a lot, but well children in this are still lively...so in the end...well, I think it would be more for older ones. But otherwise good, I think they had a good approach and they try to make it entertaining which is not easy." (m)
- Improvements – "I think it was fine. Maybe some contest would be good. And what I liked especially were the sitting sessions that they could do something different than at the other tours." (f)
- "Well for them, you know they are girls so they like being at castle. I think that in the beginning they liked it a lot and then it was the same, but they manage it." (m)
- "We always try to find something where they have programme for children. Like at Staré Hrady. I think it is a good way to attract people. And they have a good website here which is good. And they have a lot of events." (m)
- the girls liked the most the cats – "I liked everything." (d)
- And the older girl remembers things from the tour

20. T Mother, daughter (7 years) and friend (director of School of Fine Arts) (Prague)

- We were around here and we knew about the tour for children and they have the labyrinths." (fr)
- Did you like it?
    - o Well, I think it was interesting for children. (m)
    - o Well, yes, they attempt to put it as it was. You can see that some of the modifications are artificial, but it is enough for children." (fr)
- the girl would recommend it to her friends .
- "Well, I can compare it with one castle in Tyrol. It is a partially reconstructed castle and we liked there that it was interactive, that children could touch many things, sit down, switch on something, read...I think that these details are missing here. It was self guided. We got even some working sheets and then walked through it. In the end there was a short movie. I think that here this is in the beginning. Well, this is one of the first castles I've seen that offers tour for children." (fr)
- "I think it is good when they get in the beginning something to work with for the whole time of the tour, it can be anything depending on their age...and that's it the age – it should be divided into categories like before school, younger school and older school children." (fr)
- "It is good that they can ask during the tour, or that it is fine if someone shouts the answer (one boy was doing it during the tour), when it does not matter that they sit down, grab things, when they can try and do not feel like in a museum but more like at home." (fr)
- "Children do not appreciate historical costume. Some copy when it is nice is enough." (fr)
- "So for instance having the original behind glass and then a copy the children could touch and do things they used to do in past with it."(fr)
- "Maybe they could try the dress or a wig."(m)
- "It is good when they have some umbrella task, that they have to collect something or so, because when it is only about history it is boring for them. There could be some activity in every room, they should vary in the rooms and keep changing." (fr)
- the man pointed out that there should not be a foreign terms, because children do not understand them
- "And I think it was too long, that it should be shorter."(fr)
- "But all and all we liked it." (m)
- the girls is shy and does not want to really talk, but she liked the tour .

21. U two mothers with children daughters 12 (d1), 8 (d2) and 3 years, and boy 7 years (Prague)

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- "We've already been here. And we were searching for some programme for children so we proposed this to our co-travellers. It was because of the labyrinths and we've found out that they have also the specialized tours." (m1)
- children liked the tour and still remember what was told there
- "I liked it a lot, because usually I suffer during the tours and do not know anything from them because I'm checking children, but this was good. We actually commented on it that it was good." (m1)
- "Some time ago we were on a similar tour in Mníšek pod Brdy. It is ideal for children." (m2)
- What did you like the most?
  - "I liked the most when we were counting the books."(d2) And did you manage to count them all? "No, I did not. There was no time." (d2)
  - "I liked everything." (d1)
  - "I liked the chandeliers." (s)
  - "I liked the whole tour, that it was presented comprehensibly and catchy." (m2)
- they would recommend it to their friends
- something you were missing?
  - "Meeting the White lady." (m1)
  - I would like to have some short history of the family, but I don't know if it would be possible to combine it with it because of the kids...of course, I understand that it cannot be presented in an entertaining way for children." (m1)
  - mother 1 also mentioned that they could not attend the classic tour
  - "I'm not the type of person for tours. I'm not able to memorize information, but this was a nice experience. So I'm satisfied." (m2)
- "Moreover, we did not know about the kids!" (m1)
- in addition, mother 1 points out that she liked that they have kids meals in the restaurant, that for instance they give you food without meat (m1)

22. **V Two families with children son 6 years (very active during the tour), daughter 6 years and boy 2 years (Beroun and Prague)**
- "Well, we were here 2 years ago so we had it in mind and came again because we've already known it." (f1)
- Have you known about the tour for children? "Well, we found it on the internet. We would have come without it, but it was even more interesting in this way." (f1)
- Did you like it?
  - "When kids are pleased, parents are pleased." (m1)
  - "Yeah. I liked the most the kitchen, well, dining room and the music room. And there was a play room for children." (s)
- "Well, we were discussing it, that they have it well done. The guide was good as she caught the attention of children. The castle does not have anything special, but they have it well done for children." (f2)
- they would recommend it to friends and agree that it was worth coming (spending time in the car)
  - "We will put it on Facebook." (f2)
- "But Alfons was missing, you know the dog, that it did not scare them." (f1)
- "I think that big motivation are the labyrinths not so much the castle, but it is well done." (f2)
- "It was good there were not the data and that it was presented in the way for children. And it had an accurate length." (m1) "So one can keep the attention." (f1)
- improvements
  - more figures, the dog or White lady
  - the boy was satisfied
- "I think it depends a lot on the guide. The young lady we had was skilful. Apart from being pretty she could catch their attention – nice dress and the overall impression." (f2)
- "As we came back, we really like it in here."(f1)

- "Maybe, they could improve the meals in the restaurant. For instance, in Litomyšl they have thematic restaurant. Here, I would not come because of the restaurant and I evaluate the place also by the restaurant. So they could have some seasonal or king meals." (f2)
- "And we planned to take a bike or child scooter but it is not allowed. Maybe they could change it." (f1)
- **"Our experience is positive."** (m1)

23. W Father, mother and two daughters (Chlumec nad cidlinou)

- "Well, we haven't been here, it is not far away and we heard about it from our relatives, so some recommendation." (f)
- Have you known about the children tour? "No, we did not, we knew about the labyrinths, but that they have the children tour no.
- Did you like it (asking the girls) – "Yes, the princess was nice. Well, I don't know, perhaps I liked everything."(d1) "And the sweets in the end."(d2)
- "I liked it because children liked it. Well, we are used to going to castles so they can do also the classical tour, but it was nice that the guide engaged them into the tour, that she was asking them things and telling them that they should look at something." (m)
- they would recommend it to their friends

24. X Father and son (Říčany)

- „Well, it is national holidays today so I wanted to go for the guided tour, for a trip to the labyrinths." (s)
- „We came because of the castle and labyrinths." (f)
- „I've been here with school." (s)
- 13th chamber – "We found it yesterday on the internet when we were preparing for the trip." (f)
- the boy liked the tour and said that he remembered almost everything
- "I think it is worth it to change the guided tours at castles so they would be more active. I liked the moment of the play, the tour was for families, that is good." (f)
- they would recommend the tour
- Were you missing something?
    - o "I don't know, I think it was entertaining enough, nice." (s)
    - o "No, it was fine. I think it was well balanced, that it was not so much about the history, well, it was for children." (f)
- they search for things for children
- "Yeah, last week we went to Potštejn, there was a guided tour with witches, so yeah, I think that it is different, I think that the non-traditional tours are nice." (f)

25. Y Mother, daughter 4 and ½ year (Pardubice)

- "We were in zoo Chleby, so I was searching for something else and interesting in the surroundings, so I booked the children tour." (m)
- "Yeah, it was beautiful, I think it was perfect, you know, the kids were listening every word, and I was listening too, I think nobody was bored and everyone was listening, it was very pleasant." (m); the girl is nodding
- improvements
    - o "Maybe more dresses, because toys were there. And well, it was not too childish, parents could find something for them in it as well."(m)
    - o the girl says that she would like to live at the castle
- "They could sit at the dining table and they can't usually, and the lady, she was great, she always told them what is going to be next and what is gonna happen if they try something so everyone was holding against the wall waiting to fall somewhere." (m)
- Would you recommend it? "Definitely, I'm planning to do so." The girl is nodding but more occupied with the sweets
- "I was missing some information about the Taxis obstacle." (m)

26. Z Mother, Father, son and daughter (Říčany)

- "It is 45 minutes by car, we came on recommendation, we got a tip that here are a lot of labyrinths for children." (f)
- "It was great, I liked it." (d), "We liked everything." (d); also the tasks

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- "Definitely, it was catchy, well, I would have had a lot of questions, but I did not want to interrupt the tour, perhaps would be good to attend parallel the programme for adults." (f)
- "I would like to go for the chocolate tour." (m)
- What was missing?
    o "Well, maybe more how they used to live, for instance, Anička she had at school comparison of the old and new school." (f)
    o "But they had it there, you know, what they used to eat, the toys, school..." (m)
    o "Well, ok" (f)
- "I don't like that I can't touch the things that I can't try out everything." (d) "But you could sit down here." (mother) "But, otherwise there were everywhere signs not to touch things." (f)
- "Maybe lay down on the bed."(s)
- Would you recommend it?
    o "Definitely, it is spreading among families with children and we had not known that you get a discount card for other attractions." (f)
- "It is good that here you have nature, that you don't come and there is nothing else to do, so we were 2 hours in the park in the labyrinths." (f)

27. Ø Mother, Father, two daughters 6 (d1) and 8 (d2) years (Lysá nad Labem)
- "Well, we got lost. Yesterday, we were thinking what to do and I wanted to go to Luštěnice to some ruins and well, they send us here." (f)
- the girls wanted to go somewhere else but they liked the tour a lot
- "I liked it a lot." (m)
- "Well, for me I would...I was missing some things, it was limited to 19th century and I was doubting some things, but it is for kids, I had not really found myself in it." (f)
- "I consider it totally great, especially that kids could sit down and I did not have to control them all the time so they would not touch things." (m)
- "I would like to participate in the ghost séance." (d2)
- "But good that the dog did not catch us." (d1) "Haha, she held me strongly." (f)
- Would you recommend it?
    o "Yeah, definitely, there was nothing bothering us. For me, I was missing the historical facts, that I don't really know anything about the castle now, you know." (f)

28. Æ Mother, Father, son 7 years, daugther 4 years (Prague)
- "Well, we found it on the internet when we were searching for something for kids and son has been here with his school, but he did not manage to see all the labyrinths. thus, we decided to come." (f)
- Did you like the tour? (kids are repeating their answers)
    o Yes, everything.
    o they did not like the questions nor counting the books, the girl liked cats.
- "I liked it in general, I was just commenting it now, that even for me it was easier to understand it than the pure historical presentation. I'm interested more in the way people used to live than in the dates, I don't remember those." (f)
- "I liked it as well, it was very well done, nicely prepared for children." (m)
- "Maybe if they could touch more things, you know, like some furry. They like to try everything. I think they were pleased when they could sit down in the dining room." (m)
- "Mum, I would like to see the dog." (s)

29. Å Two guys with girl 7 years and boy 5 years (Nymburk)
- they came for a trip and did not know about the guided tour, just the labyrinths, the girl has been there various times
- kids liked the tour, everything
- "Well, it was nice for the kids. We went because of them, it is really mainly for them." (fr)
- "It would be good if they could draw something and take it, you know to have something permanent, so when they would find it as home they would remember." (fr)
- they would recommend it

30. Ñ Mother, father, son 6 years and daughter 3 years (Mladá Boleslav)

- "Well, it was near, it is only 25 minutes and in the morning it was sunny, then raing and now sunny again. It is our first time here." (m)
- "I did not know about the guided tours, but the labyrinths and that is why we are here, to be outside for a while.(m)
- "We chose the tour here with the lady at the cash desk, she advised us to take the one for children instead of the one with White Lady that we originally wanted. She said that it is for older children." (m)
- "I liked it, the guide talks nicely with the kids."(m)
- "I think it was accurate, I think you know their attention...and Verunka not at all."
- "I liked that she talked nicely with the kids, that she even did not need us and communicate more with children than adults, that it was more oriented on children, show them the things and they can touch them and they could sit by the table." (m)
- would you recommend it? "Definitely, it is nice here, both labyrinths and inside." (m)

Appendix 7 - The themes identified in the interviews

- cultural sites visiting
    - previous experience
    - relationship
    - the current offer of cultural tourism for families with children
- motivation
    - family trip
    - decision influencers/makers
    - trip because of children
- evaluation of the overall experience
    - the costs (money, time spent on the travel)
- evaluation of the tours/ comparison to the classical tours
    - the concept
        - suitability for children/adults
        - nature - interactivity/engagement,/education/entertaining/edutaining
    - guide
    - setting – inside/outside
        - complexity/coherence/mystery
    - touchpoints
    - classical tours as a barrier for families with children
    - recommendations of the tours
    - suggestions for improvement of the tours and the environment
- experience
    - children/adults/family
    - peak experience/supporting experience
    - experience hermeneutic circle
    - sensory experiences
    - togetherness paradox
    - identification with the needs of children