

Abstract of the doctoral dissertation entitled
"Determinants of the use of catering services in the logistics discourse"

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One of the basic needs in human life, resulting from the functions of life, is the need to satisfy hunger. However, currently it cannot be only limited to strictly physiological needs. Along with the dynamic development of humanity, satisfying hunger began to take on a completely different meaning, changing its character to a more emotional one. Food evokes memories and sentiments; visiting friends or family is associated with eating meals; and even souvenirs from foreign trips are usually local alcohols or food products typical of the visited places.

Catering services meet the basic needs of consumers, and using them is often associated with an increase in the quality of life. Nowadays, we are dealing with a situation in which the demand for services can be considered practically unlimited. Interestingly, although the concept of catering services has been appearing since antiquity, it is not clearly defined in the literature, resulting in even more difficult determinations of definitions of its functions, classifications or scopes. Customers are more and more conscious and pay attention to health or aesthetic values. Along with the change of the lifestyle, modern consumers are more willing to use what is offered by catering services, and the challenge the industry begins to face is getting to know the needs of its guests.

Logistics is inextricably linked to many theories and fields of science, both in the theoretical and practical way. The search for solutions in the spectrum of logistics, observed in economic and social practice, is related to two important factors: firstly, the visibility of universality of principles of logistics, and secondly, the real need to support human activity.

Logistic processes are implemented to a greater or lesser extent in every enterprise. Depending on the size and specificity of the activity, the scope and nature of the implemented processes and logistics activities will be different. Unfortunately, what is not given enough attention in the literature, is the fact that the strategic areas of functioning of the gastronomy sector affecting the level of customer service, are primarily logistics areas. They are present in each type of catering establishment, and ensuring the availability (of places or dishes) is the overriding goal of every entrepreneur in the sector.

Relationships between the catering sector and logistics are a hitherto unrecognised research area. The available scientific studies, both domestic and foreign, only take into account the aspect of location. In addition, it is analysed in terms of marketing which should be considered a significant simplification. There are also scientific papers depicting logistics as a support for the tourist sector. Gastronomy itself is treated only as a part of the offer of tourist operators, and not as an independent branch of business, important not only for tourists. Filling the identified research gap is related not only to the identification of determinants influencing the use of catering services, but will also be an attempt to conceptualise gastronomy in the area of logistics and its embedding in the logistics discourse.

The issues presented above became the theoretical basis for the dissertation. It leads to the main goal of the work, which is to identify the determinants of the use of catering services in terms of the logistics discourse. Goal is completed by the main research question: *what and how determines the use of catering services in terms of logistics*. Three specific research questions were also assumed:

- 1) What is the link between the determinants of the use of catering services and logistics?
- 2) Which determinants of using catering services of a logistic nature are the most important ones?
- 3) How are the determinants of using catering services of a logistic nature related to consumer behaviour?

The thesis of the work was put forward: the determinants of the use of catering services are of a logistic and non-logistic nature. Three detailed hypotheses were also assumed:

- H1 In the set of determinants of the use of catering services, prevail those of a logistic nature.
- H2 Determinants of the use of catering services of a logistic nature are more important than those of a non-logistic one.
- H3 Consumer decisions regarding the use of catering services are mostly behavioural.

The elements determining the use of catering services, with particular emphasis on logistic ones were established as the object of the research. The subjects of the research were owners and managers running various types of catering establishments representing the supply side, and consumers using catering services being the demand side.

Due to the low degree of recognition of the study area, both in theoretical and practical terms, it was decided to use triangulation of methods and data. Both qualitative and quantitative research were carried out, which allowed the identification of determinants of the

use of catering services from two perspectives (entrepreneur and consumer). Chosen methodological approach was reflected in the structure of the work.

The work consists of four chapters. The first two sections form the theoretical part of the dissertation based on extensive literature research, both domestic and foreign. The next two chapters are the result of research exploration, the basis of which was, on the one hand, the observation method and a case study for qualitative research, and the survey method supported by telephone-pre interview for quantitative research. It is complemented by a table of contents, bibliography, lists of figures, tables and charts, as well as final conclusions. Attachments containing the interview scenario, questionnaire and statistical tables were also added.

The first chapter has been dedicated to the systematisation of knowledge in the context of behavioural economics and logistics and customers' conducts. In order to organise the issues, considerations on the contamination of logistics with other fields of science, its definition and its delimitation of the use were carried out. Important part of this chapter is shaped by the deliberation on behavioural economics. The author undertook the presentation of the main directions of the development of behavioural economics along with differences in relation to mainstream economics, anomalies in consumer behaviour, basic heuristics and decision-making mechanisms. An analysis of consumer behaviours along with their characteristics was also carried out.

The second chapter focuses on gastronomy. The most important historical events affecting the development of gastronomy, its components as well as contemporary trends and directions of development of the gastronomy industry were presented. The author also characterised catering services along with their division and characteristics. Types of customers of catering services and factors determining consumer behaviour on the food market were shown. This chapter also contains the typology and division of catering establishments and presents the areas of logistic support that can be implemented in catering services along with their detailed characteristics.

The third chapter is a description of the research methodology adopted by the author and includes a detailed description of the organisation of the conducted qualitative and quantitative research. It contains the basic assumptions of the work, the characteristics of the research sample, the methods applied with selected techniques and research tools. The final part of the chapter concerns the characteristics of the demand and supply sides.

The last, fourth chapter contains the results of the conducted empirical research in the field of determinants of the use of catering services. The presented research strategy allows an

analysis leading to the exploration of research hypotheses, which were falsified in the first part of the chapter. The second part focuses on the analysis of case studies with the use of coding. The chapter ends with a list of the determinants of the use of catering services identified for the supply and demand side, together with their comparison and reference to the theoretical threads presented in the first chapters of the dissertation.

Conducted research and the results of literature analysis made it possible to the implementation of the main goal, verification of the thesis, obtaining answers to the research questions and verification of hypotheses. Determinants of the use of catering services have been identified and their relationship with logistics has been demonstrated. The added value of this study is the demonstration of the relationship between behavioural economics and logistics, which permits new research fields and exploration areas. The category of usability and accessibility indicated in the literature analysis is a clear link between practical logistics and emotionally charged consumer behaviour.

Identification of determinants of the use of catering services from the point of view of entrepreneurs and consumers allowed the obtainment of interesting research material. Differences in the perception of the elements determining decisions on the choice of a gastronomic establishment permit, on the one hand, to understand better the contemporary guest, and on the other hand, they enable better adjustment of the strategy of operation on a visibly competitive market like gastronomy. The evident aspect of being guided by emotions in decision-making should be more widely analysed as part of research in the field of social logistics, which puts people at the centre of its interests.

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