Journal of Posthumanism

2025
Volume: 5, No: 5, pp. 3670–3691
ISSN: 2634-3576 (Print) | ISSN 2634-3584 (Online)
posthumanism.co.uk

DOI: https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i5.1808

Profile of the Managers in the Destination Management Organisations (DMOS) in Slovakia

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Abstract

Effective destination management depends on skilled managers who use resources strategically. This research analyses the profiles of Slovak destination managers, examining their demographics, education, experience, roles, management styles and competencies. It answers the question: What characteristics characterise managers in Slovak destination management organisations? The quantitative survey was conducted with 40 managers in Slovakia. Basic statistical methods were used to analyse the data, including calculating frequencies and percentages for each category of respondents. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to assess the significance of differences between groups of respondents. The findings indicate that most hold a university degree and have more than five years of experience. Interpersonal skills are paramount, with participative leadership dominating. Planning and organising are key functions. Managers excel in soft skills such as teamwork and motivation but struggle to improve in sales and marketing. Identifying this profile is crucial for enhancing training programmes and informed strategic decisions in Slovakia's tourism development.

Keywords: *Destination Manager, Destination Management Organisation, Slovakia, Skills.*

Introduction

Success in the global tourism market is achieved by destinations that can strengthen their market position and enhance their competitiveness. The destination manager is crucial in this process as a coordinator and mediator among various stakeholders, including the public administration, private sector, and local communities (Foris & Bivolaru, 2022). Their primary responsibility is to ensure effective cooperation and communication among partners to promote sustainable tourism development (Gúčik et al., 2012). Destination managers create and implement strategic plans to enhance a destination's attractiveness by setting goals, developing projects, and ensuring sustainable growth (Shariffuddin et al., 2020). They are essential in marketing and branding a destination to distinguish it from competitors (Genç & Pirnar, 2009). A crucial aspect of marketing involves creating products under a unified brand and ensuring effective communication. Additionally, they oversee the quality of infrastructure and services to improve visitor satisfaction (Dania, Mlejnková & Rašovská, 2019). Their focus lies in providing culturally enriching and enjoyable experiences tailored to different visitor segments (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010). Strong leadership skills, combined with a blend of hard and soft skills, are essential for managing these diverse roles (Tuohino & Konu, 2014). Given the

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importance of this position, a research project was undertaken to analyse the personality profile of destination managers in Slovakia. The study aims to identify key areas crucial for the development of successful managers. As previous research has only marginally covered this topic, this study makes a significant contribution. Theoretically, it expands the understanding of personal characteristics, skills, and competencies essential for effective destination management. Practically, it addresses challenges in Slovak tourism, such as seasonality, insufficient marketing, competition, and crises. The results can serve as a foundation for enhancing educational programmes, selection, and training of managers, and allow for comparisons with practices abroad.

Literature Review

A destination manager's role is multifaceted, requiring strategic planning, marketing, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and a sustainability focus (Morrison, 2023; Cerdá-Mansilla et al., 2023). In Slovakia, institutional and legislative frameworks support this role through various legal forms (see Table 1), including interest associations, civil associations, commercial companies, and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), established after the 2011 Act on the Support of Tourism (Gúčik, 2012, 2020; Gajdošík & Šebová, 2020). Currently, Slovakia has eight regional and 39 local DMOs (Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Slovak Republic, 2025).

Legal form	**Legal norm**
Interest association of legal persons	Civil Code No. 40/1964 Coll., § 20f
Civil Association	Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on the association of citizens
Association under a contract of association	Civil Code No. 40/1964 Coll., § 829-841
Commercial company	Commercial Code No. 513/1991 Coll.
Destination Management Organisation (DMO) **a) Regional Destination Management Organisation** **b) Local Destination Management Organisation**	Act No. 91/2010 Coll. on Support of Tourism

Table 1 Legal Forms of the Management Organisations in the Slovak Republic

Definitions of destination management vary but commonly include stakeholder coordination, strategic development, marketing, sustainability, visitor and impact management, and innovation (Fayos-Solá et al., 2014; de Rosa et al., 2019; Fyall & Garrod, 2020; Marin-Pantelescu et al., 2022; Dzúriková & Maráková, 2022; Pongsuppat, 2023). According to UN Tourism (2025), holistic and sustainable destination management is crucial for success. A manager's effectiveness is influenced by education, skills, experience, and personal motivation. Trustworthiness and reputation are essential for stakeholder cooperation. The destination manager profile includes hard skills (e.g., project management, administration, law, data analysis) and soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership, adaptability, empathy) (Robles, 2012; Wesley, 2017; Cleaver, 2012; Bíziková, 2024; Andreu et al., 2024). Both are necessary for leadership and effective job performance. Passion for tourism, cultural awareness, and

inclusivity are also key (Evans, 1976; Obolentseva et al., 2020; Korstanje et al., 2024). Destination managers oversee planning, organising, leading, and controlling destination activities (Durašević, 2015). This includes setting objectives, stakeholder coordination, team-building, crisis management, and performance evaluation (Nomm et al., 2020; Zehrer et al., 2014; Pearce, 2016). Key challenges include achieving economic, environmental, and social sustainability—critical for smart destinations and requiring competent leadership (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Lee et al., 2020).

Methodology

The main objective of the research is to determine the current profile of destination managers in Slovakia in terms of their soft and hard skills, depending on their length of management experience. We apply the following methods in our research: Finding expected frequencies and basic statistics, reliability and validity of the questionnaire, cross-tabulating significant variables, Factor analyses and consequences to non-parametric testing, applying non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests for chosen variables and making correlation analyses. The research questionnaire was administered via Google Forms online in 2024. As part of the research methodology, we present frequency tables of respondents' answers to the questionnaire questions, with 40 respondents from all 47 DMOs in Slovakia. The questionnaire includes the demographic data of the destination manager such as age, educational level attained, educational qualification, length of experience of the manager in a managerial position and length of experience of the manager in destination management. Other independent questions help to build a comprehensive picture of the sample of respondents. Destination managers play a crucial role in promoting and managing tourist destinations. The destination manager should, therefore, have general skills that enable him to fulfill the role of Smart Destination leadership in a DMO (Gretzel, 2022, p.7).

The starting point for tracking the dynamics of the DMO's sustainable development goals is the ability to perform the tasks of a destination manager. We are therefore looking for significant destination managers' skills that meet the key scientific and professional requirements for destination managers. In our research, we first map the significant variables that would characterize destination managers in order to find the prerequisites for key competencies by tracking differences. Using factor analysis, we try to identify the strength of significant variables that determine the competencies of destination managers. Next, we try to find out if there are differences in the abilities of destination managers that define them as different samples. Which we verify by examining the hypotheses of the variables Soft skills – Selfconfidence and by examining Hard skills – Project management between destination managers with experience up to 5 years and over 5 years. Finally, using correlation analysis, we confirm the correlations of the significant variables that we identified in our research.

Results

According to the Table 2, the age distribution of destination managers consists of 37.5% who are aged 26-35, 37.5% are aged 36-45 and 25% are aged 46-60. 15% of destination managers have a secondary or bachelor's degree and 85% have a university or doctoral degree. Most destination managers have a master's degree. Given the low number of managers with a doctoral degree, we have included them in the group with a master's degree. 52% of destination managers reported education in the field of tourism, the rest graduated from another field. The length of experience of destination managers is 52.5% with more than 5 years of experience and 47.5% with up to 5 years of experience. 60% of destination managers have more than 5 years of

experience in destination management, and 40% have less than 5 years.

The distribution of management tasks is 17.5% for administrative, 22.5% for informative, 32.5% for interpersonal and 27.5% for decision-making. 62.5% of management functions are dedicated by destination managers to planning, organising, 10% organising, leadership, checking, communicating and 27.5% planning, leadership, motivating, checking.

Destination managers also apply the democratic principle of management in 30%, liberal in 15% and participative in 40%.

Hard Skills – sales skills are average, weak or very weak in 67.5%, strong in 22.5% and very strong in 10% of destination managers. Hard skills – logic are average, weak and very weak in 17.5%, strong in 67.5% and very strong in 15% of destination managers. Hard skills – marketing skills are average, weak or very weak in 32.5%, strong in 60% and very strong in 7.5% of destination managers. Hard skills – project management are average, weak or very weak in 25%, strong in 50% and very strong in 25% of destination managers. We do not introduce rest partial tables of Hard skills – Hard skills – Foreign languages, Hard skills – Theoretical tourism knowledge, Hard skills – Legislation, Hard skills – Financial management, and Hard skills – Administration due to insignificancy of results.

Soft skills – self-confidence, are average, weak or very weak in 25%, strong in 62.5% and very strong in 12.5% of destination managers. Soft skills – conflict resolution are average, weak or very weak in 27.5%, strong in 47.5% and very strong in 25% of destination managers. Soft skills – skills to motivate are average, weak or very weak in 20%, strong in 62.5% and very strong in 17.5% of destination managers. Soft skills – Teamwork are average, weak or very weak in 12.5%, strong in 40% and very strong in 42.5% of destination managers. We do not introduce rest partial tables, Soft skills – Empathy, Soft skills – Time management, Soft skills – Communication, Soft skills – adapting to change, Soft skills – emotional intellect due to significancy of results.

Destination managers performed activities in the field of Regional Geography in 7.2%, digital marketing in 15.2%, communication in a foreign language in 2.9%, networking activities in 20.3%, product development in 21%, research in 2.9%, statistics in 8.7%, negotiation and persuasion in 7.2%, dealing with crisis situations in 3.6%, creating pleasant atmosphere in 5.8%, interpersonal relations in 2.9% and collaboration, communication and administration in 2.2%.

Destination managers intend to improve 2.7% of activities in regional geography, 22.7% in digital marketing, 10% in the use of foreign languages, 7.3% in networking, 17.3% in product development, 8.2% in research, 9.1% in statistics, 12.7% in negotiation and persuasion, 7.3% in dealing with crisis and 2.7% in interpersonal relations.

20% see the reasons for destination success in improving work efficiency, 12.5% in improving work motivation and workplace relations, 22.5% in increasing activity in the team, and 15% have no influence on the success of the destination.

75% of destination managers introduce rather yes in self-evaluation of success and 25% introduce yes in self-evaluation of success. 75% of destination managers introduce rather yes in perception of success by the environment and 25% introduce yes in perception of success by the environment.

Q	Question	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Age	26-35	15	38 %
		36-45	15	38 %
		46-60	10	25 %
2	Education degree	Secondary, Bc.	6	15 %
		Master, PhD.	34	85 %
3	Education in tourism	Yes	21	53 %
		No	19	48 %
4	Managerial position experience	Up to 5 years	19	48 %
		Over 5 years	21	53 %
5	Destination management experience	Up to 5 years	16	40 %
		Over 5 years	24	60 %
6	Managerial role	Administrative role	7	18 %
		Information role	9	23 %
		Interpersonal role	13	33 %
		Decision-making role	11	28 %
7	Management function	Planning, organising	25	63 %
		Organising, leadership, checking, communicating	4	10 %
		Planning, leadership, motivating, checking	11	28 %
8	Leadership style	Democratic	12	30 %
		Liberal	6	15 %
		Participative	22	55 %
9	Hard skills – Sales	Average, weak, very weak	27	68

	skills			%
		Strong	9	23 %
		Very strong	4	10 %
	Hard skills – HS Logic	Average, weak	7	18 %
		Strong	27	68 %
		Very strong	6	15 %
	HS Marketing skills	Average, weak, very weak	13	33 %
		Strong	24	60 %
		Very strong	3	8%
	Hard skills – Project management	Average, weak	10	25 %
		Strong	20	50 %
		Very strong	10	25 %
10	Soft skills – Self-confidence	Average, weak, very weak	10	25 %
		Strong	25	63 %
		Very strong	5	13 %
	Soft skills – Conflict resolution	Average, weak	11	28 %
		Strong	19	48 %
		Very strong	10	25 %
	Soft skills – Skills to motivate	Average, weak	8	20 %
		Strong	25	63 %
		Very strong	7	18 %
	Soft skills – Teamwork	Average, weak	5	13 %
		Strong	18	45 %
		Very strong	17	43 %

11	Activity Fields for Improvement	AF Regional geography	10	7%
		AF Digital marketing	21	15 %
		AF Foreign languages	4	3%
		AF Networking	28	20 %
		AF Product development	29	21 %
		AF Research	4	3%
		AF Statistics	12	9%
		AF Negotiation persuasion	10	7%
		AF Dealing with crisis situation	5	4%
		AF Creating pleasant atmosphere	8	6%
		AF Interpersonal relations	4	3%
		AF Collaboration, communication, admin.	3	2%
		Self-Development	12	30 %
12	Area, activity for improvement	AI Improving Regional geography	3	3%
		AI Digital marketing	25	23 %
		AI Foreign languages	11	10 %
		AI Networking	8	7%
		AI Product development	19	17 %
		AI Research	9	8%
		AI Statistics	10	9%
		AI Negotiation persuasion	14	13 %
		AI Dealing Crisis	8	7%
		AI Interpersonal relations	3	3%
13	Source of destination success	Improving work efficiency	8	20 %
		Improving work motivation & workplace rel.	5	13 %
		Increasing creativity in the team	9	23 %
		I have no influence on the success of the destination	6	15 %
14	Self-evaluation of success	Rather yes	30	75 %
		Yes	10	25 %
15	Perception of success by the environment	Rather yes	30	75 %

		Yes	10	25 %

Table 2 – Frequency Table of Questionnaire Variables

Figure 1 shows the pattern of frequencies of individual responses to the Activity fields question, which has a similar pattern to a Gaussian curve. This suggests that some activities are more commonly performed than others, with a natural midpoint around which responses cluster. In the following, we present a similar graph in Figure 2 for the question Area, activity for improvement, where it is possible to compare the number of activities that destination managers are engaged in and the areas or activities they would like to improve.

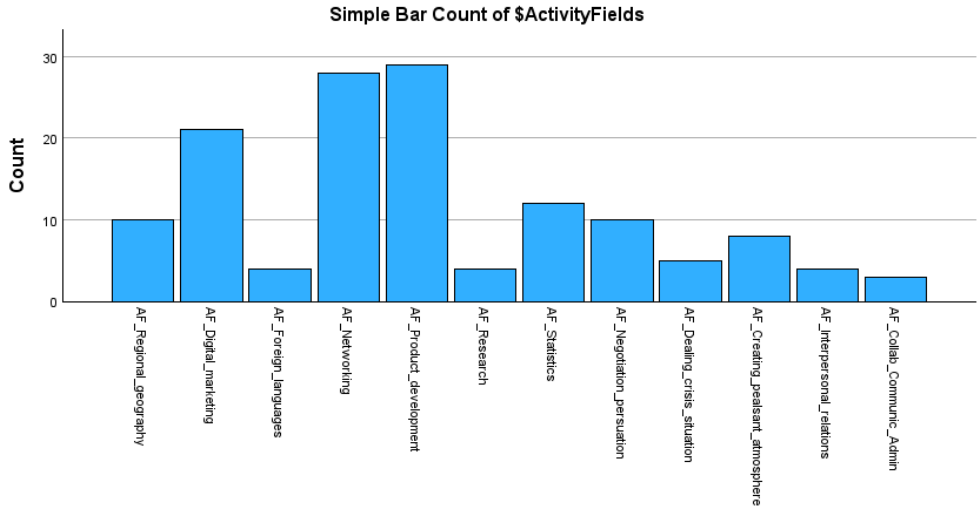

Figure 1 Flow of Answers to Q11 Activity Field

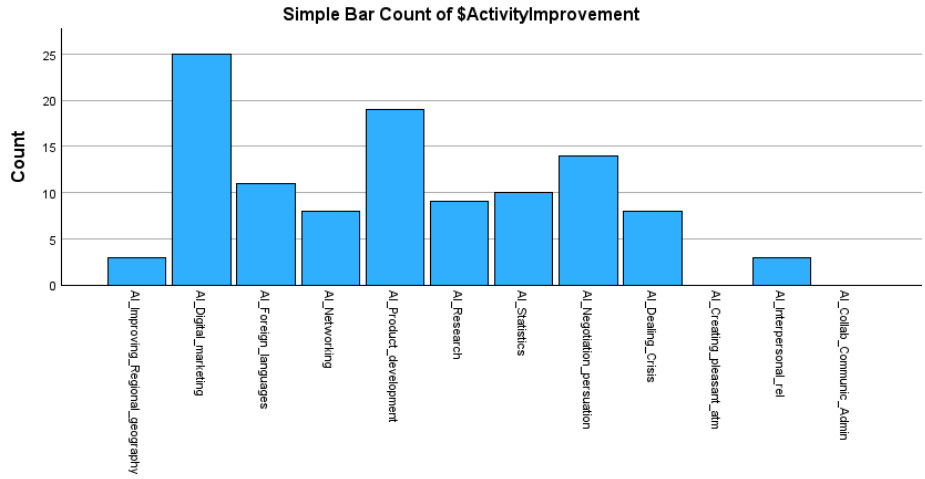

Figure 2 Flow of Answers to Q12 Area, Activity for Improvement

Reliability of Statistics and Validity of the Questionnaire

We evaluated the reliability of the dependent variables in SPSS with a value of 0.729, which represents an acceptable reliability value for the questionnaire. Respondents answered 15 simple or complex questions in the questionnaire, of which 4 questions were composed of multiple sub-questions. By summing the simple and composite questions, we analysed the reliability of a total of 52 questions as indicated in Table 3.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,729	52

Table 3 Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

Question validity means whether the variables listed are focused on the purpose for which the question is being asked. The number of respondents is 40. The degree of freedom is n – 2 = 38. We evaluated the validity by using Pearson's coefficient. We work with a probability value of 95% and a tabulated error value of 0.05. In SPSS, we proceed by summing all the values of the variables, creating a summary value and applying Pearson correlation analysis to this summary variable. We then include the covariates in the factor analysis, the Mann-Whitney U-test to examine the differences between the samples, and the correlation analysis. We also use the variables from the factor analysis and key correlations, ordered according to the factor analysis sequence.

Factor Analyses

Factor analysis is a type of structural equation modelling that deals specifically with measurement models—that is, the relationships between observed measures or indicators and latent variables or factors. Confirmatory factor analysis is well equipped to address the types of questions that researchers often ask. Factor analysis is an indispensable analytic tool for construct validation in the social and behavioural sciences. There are many methods that can be used to estimate the common factor model, such as maximum likelihood, principal factors, weighted least squares, unweighted least squares, generalised least squares, imaging analysis, minimum residual analysis, and alpha factoring, to name just some. (Brown, 2015, p. 19).

To determine the strength of the relationship among the items, there must be evidence of the coefficient of correlation > 0.3 in the correlation matrix (Shrestha, 2021, p. 6). We confirm correlation of variables of destination managers in our research > 0,3.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy KMO test is a measure that has been intended to measure the suitability of data for factor analysis. In other words, it tests the adequacy of the sample size. The test measures sampling adequacy for each variable in the model and for the complete model. The formula gives the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy:

$$KMIj = \frac{\sum_{i \neq j} R_{ij}^2}{\sum_{i \neq j} R_{ij}^2 + \sum_{i \neq j} U_{ij}^2}$$

where R_{ij} is the correlation matrix and U_{ij} is the partial covariance matrix. KMO value varies from 0 to 1. The KMO values between 0.8 to 1.0 indicate the sampling is adequate. KMO values between 0.7 and 0.79 are middling, and values between 0.6 and 0.69 are mediocre. KMO values less than 0.6 indicate the sampling is inadequate and the remedial action should be taken. If the value is less than 0.5, the factor analysis results undoubtedly will not be very suitable for the

data analysis (Shrestha, 2021, p. 6).

For destination managers, we analyse individual responses as variables. We assume that these variables are correlated, i.e., that the variables have a similar expression. At the same time, we try to identify variables that would contribute to the overall picture of destination managers. For such a picture, we used factor analysis, which could determine the characteristics of the group of our destination managers and characterise the initial conditions of the evaluation criteria, as well as hard and soft skills. In addition, using factor analysis, we determine the strength of the variable, which determines the variable's size related to a given factor. In our study, we work with two-factor analysis.

In factor analysis, we seek to answer the question of which variables in our sample are determinants or which variables are determinants for our respondents. We also examine how similar the variables are to each other. The factors divide the respondents' answers (variables) along two axes. Using factor analysis, we consider only the valid variables. Thus, we selected the variables: Age, Education degree, Managerial position experience, Destination management experience, Management role, HS – marketing skills, HS – digital skills, HS – foreign languages, HS – theoretical tourism knowledge, HS – project management, HS – sales skills, Soft skills – communication, Soft skills – self-confidence, Soft skills – skills to motivate, Soft skills – conflict resolution, Soft skills – team work, Activity fields – networking, Area and activity improvement – networking, Source of destination success, Self-evaluation of success, and Perception of success by the environment. Finally, we exclude some of the chosen variables within the PCA analyses if they are unimportant. After factor analysis, we excluded those variables that were not part of the factors. The KMO coefficient of the factor analysis was found to be 0.703, an acceptable value on which to base the results of our analysis. At the same time, the probability value is shown to be statistically significant (<.001) according to Table 4. We accept a cumulative percentage of Eigen values of 42.176 for both factors.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,703
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	213,882
	df	78
	Sig.	<,001

Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Using factor analysis, we identified two main components that characterize the variables of our sample of destination managers. Table 5 lists these two principal components.

	1	2
Self-evaluation of success	,818	
Soft skills Self-confidence	,781	
Perception of success by the environment	,709	
Soft skills Conflict solution	,644	
Soft skills – To motivate	,573	
HS Project management	,570	

HS Sales skills	,547	
HS Logic	,488	
HS Marketing skills	,466	
Soft skills Teamwork	,437	
Managerial position experience		,710
Age		,659
Destination management experience		,404
Σ	6,033	1,773
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring		
a. 2 factors extracted. 14 iterations required.		
Own elaboration		

Table 5 Factor Matrixa

The first factor is highly correlated with the variables Self-evaluation of success, Soft skills Self-confidence, Ambient success, Soft skills Conflict resolution, Soft skills – Skills to motivate, HS Project management, HS Sales skills, HS Logic, HS Marketing skills, and Soft skills Teamwork. This factor could be called the factor of destination manager skills:

The second factor is also highly correlated with age, Managerial position experience, and Destination management experience. This factor could be called the factor of practice in the position, age and experience.

Out of the total number of 13 variables, we can explain 6,033+1,773=7,806 variables in this way.

The scree plot shows the eigenvalues of the variables in the Graph 3. The Graph 4 – the 2D distribution graph shows the distribution of the decisive variables, which form two factors.

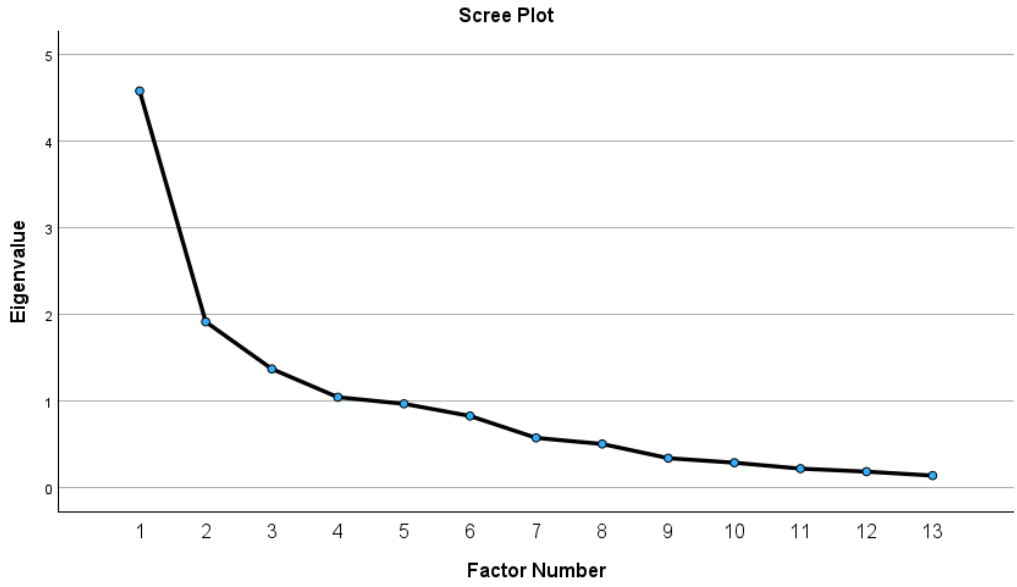

Figure 3 Scree Plot of Eigen Values

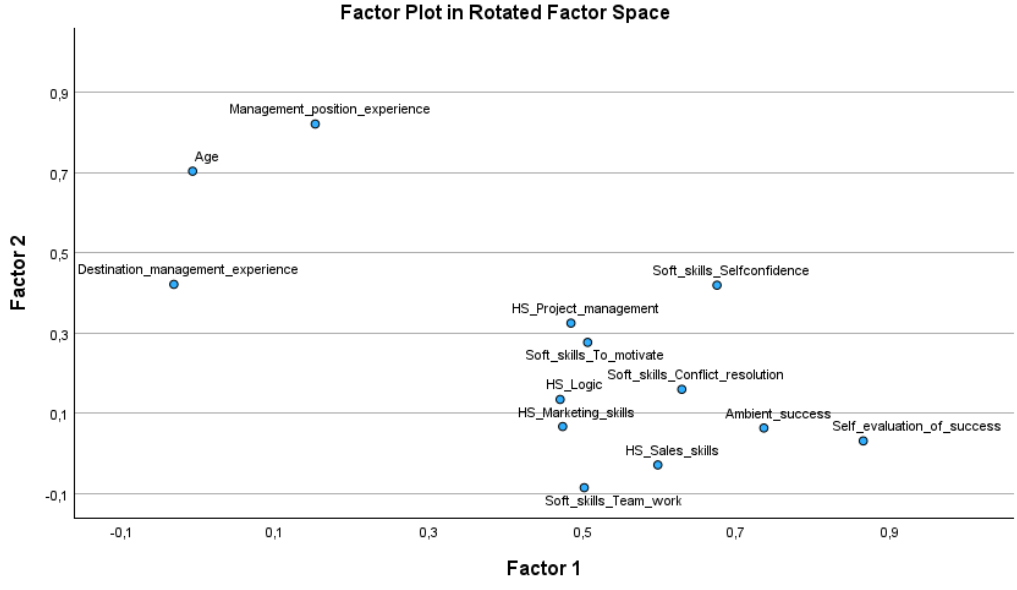

Figure 4 Factor Plot Distribution of Variables by Factor Analysis

Non-Parametric Tests of Variables

Based on the factor analysis, two main components characterise the sample of destination managers. We identified 14 significant relationships. We subjected these sessions to analysis using the Mann-Whitney U-test and correlation analysis. The following non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test will establish the relationships within the variable Managerial possession

experience, consisting of two samples.

Relation Between Managerial Position Experience and Soft Skills Self-Confidence

In the Managerial position experiences variable, we accept two independent groups. The first group is managers with up to 5 years of experience and the second group is managers with more than 5 years of experience. The possible answers to the Soft Skills – Self-confidence question are 1. weak and average, 2. strong and 3. very strong skills. We are trying to determine whether there are significant differences in Soft Skills – Self-confidence between managers with experience up to 5 years and those with experience more than 5 years.

	Managerial position experience	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Soft skills Self-confidence	up to 5 years	19	15,63	297,00
	Over 5 years	21	24,90	523,00
	Total	40		

Table 6 Ranks of Managerial Position Experience

Table 6 shows the ranks of the variable Managerial possession experience, Table 7 shows the result of the Mann-Whitney U-test, and Table 8 shows the median values of the variable Managerial possession experience.

	Soft skills Self-confidence
Mann-Whitney U	107,000
Wilcoxon W	297,000
Z	-2,915
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,004
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,012
a. Grouping Variable: Managerial position experience	

Table 7 Test Statisticsa

Soft skills Self-confidence				
Managerial position experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Median
up to 5 years	4,14	21	,573	4,00

Over 5 years	3,58	19	,507	4,00
Total	3,87	40	,607	4,00

Table 8 Report

We test the hypothesis H_0. There is a statistically significant difference in Soft Skills – Self-confidence between destination managers with experience up to 5 years and over 5 years.

We used the Mann-Whitney U-test to analyse destination managers' soft skills and self-confidence differences. The test confirmed a significant difference in Soft Skills Self – confidence of destination managers with experience up to 5 years (Median = 4, n = 21) and destination managers with experience over 5 years (Median = 4, n = 19), U = 107.000, z = 2.915, p = ,004, effect size r = 2.915/√40 = 0.46090, what is medium effect size. The difference in response to the question what is Soft skills – self-confidence of destination managers with experience up to 5 years and with experience more than 5 years is different with moderate effect size and statistically significant. We confirm hypothesis H_0.

Relation Between Managerial Position Experiences and HS Project Management

The Managerial possession experiences variable has two independent groups. The first group is managers with up to 5 years of experience and the second group is managers with more than 5 years of experience. The possible answers to the question of hard skills project management ability are weak and average, strong and very strong ability. We are trying to find out whether there are significant differences in hard project management ability between managers with experience up to 5 years and those with more than 5 years of experience.

Table 9 shows the ranks of the variable Managerial position experience, Table 10 shows the result of the Mann-Whitney U-test, and Table 11 shows the median values of the variable Managerial position experience.

	Managerial position experience	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
HS Project management	up to 5 years	19	15,76	299,50
	Over 5 years	21	24,79	520,50
	Total	40		

Table 9 Ranks of Managerial Position Experience

	HS Project management
Mann-Whitney U	109,500

Wilcoxon W	299,500
Z	-2,653
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,008
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,014
a. Grouping Variable: Managerial position experience	

Table 10 Test Statisticsa

HS Project management				
Managerial position experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Median
up to 5 years	4,29	21	,644	4,00
Over 5 years	3,68	19	,671	4,00
Total	4,00	40	,716	4,00

Table 11: Report

We test the hypothesis H_0. There is a statistically significant difference in Hard skills Project management between destination managers with experience up to 5 years and over 5 years. We used Mann-Whitney U-test to analyse the difference in Hard Skills Project Management of destination managers. The test confirmed a significant difference in Hard skills Project Management of destination managers with experience up to 5 years (Median = 4, n = 21) and destination managers with experience over 5 years (Median = 4, n = 19), U = 109.500, z = 2.653, p = .008, effect size r = 2.653/√40 = 0.4194761, what is medium effect size. The difference in response to the question what are Hard skills – Project management of destination managers with experience up to 5 years and with experience more than 5 years is different with moderate effect size and statistically significant. We confirm hypothesis H_0.

Correlation Analysis

In the correlation analysis, we select variables from factor analysis that show significant dependence. We carried out the correlation analysis based on Pearson's coefficient.

		Soft skills Self-confidence	HS Project management	Managerial position experience
Soft skills Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	,472**	-,470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002	,002
	N	40	40	40
HS Project management	Pearson Correlation	,472**	1	-,425**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002		,006
	N	40	40	40
Managerial position experience	Pearson Correlation	-,470**	-,425**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,006	
	N	40	40	40
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Table 12: Correlations

According to Table 12, there is a significant correlation r = 0.472, n = 40, p = 0.002 between Soft Skills Self-confidence variable and Hard Skills Project management variable, the strength of the correlation is moderate. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.470, n = 40, p = 0.002 between the Soft Skills Self-confidence variable and the Management position experience variable, the strength of the correlation is moderate. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.425, n = 40, p = 0.006 between the variable Hard skills – Project management and the variable Managerial position experience, the strength of the correlation is moderate.

		Soft skills Self-confidence	Soft skills Conflict solution	Soft skills To motivate	Perception of success by the environment
Soft skills Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	,511**	,605**	,506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	40	40	40	40
Soft skills Conflict solution	Pearson Correlation	,511**	1	,281	,498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		,079	,001
	N	40	40	40	40
Soft skills To motivate	Pearson Correlation	,605**	,281	1	,401*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,079		,010
	N	40	40	40	40
Perception of success by the environment	Pearson Correlation	,506**	,498**	,401*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,001	,010	
	N	40	40	40	40
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Table 13: Correlations

According to Table 13, there is a significant correlation r = 0.511, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the Soft Skills – Self-confidence variable and the Soft Skills – Conflict solution variable; the strength of the correlation is high. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.601, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable Soft Skills Self-confidence and the variable Soft Skills – Skills to

motivate; the strength of the correlation is high. At the same time, **there is no correlation** r = 0.281, n = 40, p = 0.079 between the variable Soft Skills Conflict solution and the variable Soft Skills - Skills to motivate. Also, there is a correlation r = 0.498, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the Soft Skills – Conflict solution variable and the Perception of success by the environment variable; the strength of the correlation is moderate. Further, there is a correlation of r = 0.401, n = 40, p = 0.010 between the variable Soft skills – Skills to motivate and the variable Perception of success by the environment; the strength of the correlation is moderate.

		Self-evaluation of success	HS Sales skills	Perception of success by the environment
Self-evaluation of success	Pearson Correlation	1	,498**	,733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001	<,001
	N	40	40	40
HS Sales skills	Pearson Correlation	,498**	1	,585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001		<,001
	N	40	40	40
Perception of success by the environment	Pearson Correlation	,733**	,585**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	
	N	40	40	40
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 14: Correlations

According to Table 14, there is a significant correlation r = 0.498, n = 40, p = 0.001 between Self-evaluation of success and the variable HS – Sales skills; the strength of the correlation is moderate. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.733, n = 40, p = 0.001 between Self-evaluation of success and the variable Perception of success by the environment; the strength of the correlation is high. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.585, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable HS – Sales skills and the variable Perception of success by the environment; the strength of the correlation is high.

		HS Project management	HS Sales skills	HS Logic	HS Marketing skills	Self-evaluation of success
HS Project management	Pearson Correlation	1	,212	,435**	,365*	,490**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,189	,005	,021	,001
	N	40	40	40	40	40
HS Sales skills	Pearson Correlation	,212	1	,423**	,274	,498**
	Sig. (2-	,189		,007	,087	,001

	tailed)					
	N	40	40	40	40	40
HS Logic	Pearson Correlation	,435**	,423**	1	,283	,431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005	,007		,076	,006
	N	40	40	40	40	40
HS Marketing skills	Pearson Correlation	,365*	,274	,283	1	,447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,021	,087	,076		,004
	N	40	40	40	40	40
Self-evaluation of success	Pearson Correlation	,490**	,498**	,431**	,447**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,001	,006	,004	
	N	40	40	40	40	40
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 15: Correlations

According to Table 15, there is no correlation r = 0.212, n = 40, p = 0.189 between the variable HS – Project management and the variable HS – Sales skills. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.435, n = 40, p = 0.005 between the variable HS – Project management and the variable HS – Logic, the strength of the correlation is moderate. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.365, n = 40, p = 0.021 between the variable HS – Project management and the variable HS – Marketing skills, the strength of the correlation is moderate. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.490, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable HS – Project management and the variable Self-evaluation of success; the strength of the correlation is moderate. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.423, n = 40, p = 0.007 between the variable HS – Sales skills and the variable HS – Logic, the strength of the correlation is moderate. There is no correlation r = 0.435, n = 40, p = 0.005 between the variable HS – Sales skills and the variable HS – Marketing skills. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.498, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable HS – Sales skills and the variable Self-evaluation of success, the strength of the correlation is moderate. There is no significant correlation r = 0.423, n = 40, p = 0.007 between the variable HS – Logic and the variable HS – Marketing skills. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.431, n = 40, p = 0.006 between the variable HS – Logic and the variable Self-evaluation of success, the strength of the correlation is moderate. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.447, n = 40, p = 0.004 between the variable HS – Marketing skills and the variable Self-evaluation of success, the strength of the correlation is moderate.

		Soft skills Conflict solution	Soft skills Teamwork	Self-evaluation of success
Soft skills Conflict solution	Pearson Correlation	1	,524**	,578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001

	N	40	40	40
Soft skills Teamwork	Pearson Correlation	,524**	1	,426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		,006
	N	40	40	40
Self-evaluation of success	Pearson Correlation	,578**	,426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,006	
	N	40	40	40
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 16: Correlations

According to Table 16, there is a significant correlation r = 0.524, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable Soft skills – Conflict solution and the variable Soft skills – Teamwork; the strength of the correlation is high. Further, there is a significant correlation r = 0.578, n = 40, p = 0.001 between the variable Soft skills – Conflict solution and the variable Self-evaluation of success; the strength of the correlation is high. Also, there is a significant correlation r = 0.426, n = 40, p = 0.006 between the variable Soft skills – Teamwork and the variable Self-evaluation of success; the strength of the correlation is moderate.

Discussion

Slovak destination managers are highly educated, with most holding Master's degrees. Their experience in general management is evenly distributed, but more than half have over five years of experience specifically in destination management. Interpersonal roles and participative leadership styles are predominant, reflecting a collaborative approach. Planning and organising are the primary managerial functions, while soft skills such as teamwork and motivation are highly valued. However, hard skills in sales and marketing need improvement compared to other competencies. Survey results provide insight into current activities and perceived areas for improvement. Figure 1 shows that networking, strategic planning, and product development are the most frequently undertaken activities, while interpersonal relations, communication, code of conduct, and administration receive less attention. Figure 2 reveals that managers feel the greatest need for improvement in networking, product development, and digital marketing—activities aligned with those most frequently performed. The consistent neglect of administrative tasks and the code of conduct may suggest a perceived lower importance. The need to improve frequently performed activities indicates evolving challenges in destination management driven by market dynamics, technology, stakeholder expectations, and changing tourist preferences. Factor analysis identified two main components of managerial competence. The first includes self-assessment, soft skills (confidence, conflict resolution, motivation, teamwork), and hard skills (project management, sales, logistics, marketing), underscoring the importance of personal and professional capabilities in achieving success. The second component involves age and managerial and destination management experience, highlighting experience as a key factor in shaping strategic approaches. The analysis was statistically supported by a KMO of 0.703 and a significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.001$), with the two components explaining 42.176% of the variance. Mann- Whitney U- test results revealed that managers with more than five years of experience demonstrated significantly higher self-confidence ($p = 0.004$) and stronger project management skills ($p = 0.008$) than their less experienced counterparts. These results emphasise the value of experience and a balanced skill set in enhancing managerial effectiveness.

Conclusion

The profile of a destination manager encompasses a wide range of roles and responsibilities, requiring a diverse set of competencies to address the challenges and leverage opportunities in the dynamic field of destination management. Effective destination managers are pivotal in ensuring tourism destinations' sustainable development and competitiveness. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that destination managers primarily focus on networking, strategic planning, product development, and digital marketing, and these are also the areas where they feel the greatest need for improvement. This shows the dynamism of the profession, where constant innovation and adaptation to new conditions play a key role. Conversely, the areas with less activity and need for development may reflect their secondary importance within destination management or their potential underestimation. These findings may help design educational programmes and training courses that better reflect the needs of destination managers in Slovakia. They can also serve as a basis for further research aimed at a deeper analysis of the factors influencing these preferences and their implications for the effectiveness of destination management and, ultimately, the success and competitiveness of the destination in the global tourism market.

The survey reveals certain limitations that offer opportunities for future research. While the study included 40 managers from 47 Slovak DMOs, representing a relatively small sample, it still covered over 50% of employed managers. Expanding the sample size in future studies could enhance the reliability of findings. Additionally, a longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into the evolution of managers' competencies over time. This research focuses solely on Slovakia, so its results could serve as a foundation for international comparative analyses with other European countries.

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