REGIONAL AIRPORTS

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Summary: The consequence of social and economic changes in the Czech Republic was the liberalization of air transport. After the politically bipolar Europe ceased to exist and the Czech Republic joined NATO, there was no need to keep so many military airports, which were therefore converted into civilian airports. After some time and especially recently, it is thought that the airports should be deemed as an integral part of the public transport infrastructure.

Key words: Air transport, regional airport, regional develepment, new line

INTRODUCTION

Historically, air transport is the newest type of transport. However, in recent decades it is the most dynamically developing means of transport in both passenger and freight transportation. Current demand for air transport is mainly caused by geopolitical, social and economic changes related to the globalization process.

1. REGIONAL AIRPORT FORMATION

Česká správa letišť, s. p.

One of the first steps in air transport after 1990 was transfer of airports administration from Československé aerolinie to newly established Česká správa letišť and Slovenská správa letísk. Activities of Česká správa letišť were ceased as of 1 July 2004. Airports Brno – Tuřany, Ostrava – Mošnov and Karlovy Vary – Olšová Vrata were transferred to the ownership of the regions. After the ownership transfer of Brno – Tuřany and Ostrava – Mošnov these were transformed to joint-stock companies and Karlovy Vary – Olšová Vrata to limited liability company. (1)

The only airport which remained owned by the Czech Republic (Ministry of Finance), resp. joint-stock company Prague Airport is Praha – Ruzyně. Administration of all other airports is in hands of their owners as the state only plays the role of a regulator, legislator and ensures supervision of state power in civilian air transport.

2. REGONAL AIRPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Regional airports development used to be very slow which was related to their function. The main aviation hub in the Czech Republic from the international transportation point of view was the airport Praha – Ruzyně and local airports served as “collectors and distributors” from and to this airport where they were certain of high lines utilization.

Due to the growing demand for air transport and the fact that the Czech Republic joined both the EU and Schengen, the owners of regional airports were forced to invest large sums of money into their development. Since the Czech Republic committed itself to overtake Schengen

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agreements, the regional airports had to adjust their terminals so that it would be possible to serve the Schengen passengers separately. In the event that any of the airports would not meet the requirements based on Schengen agreements, the airport would not be granted the status of international airport with outer border.

Measures related to the Schengen Agreement were of three types – technical, construction and administrative. Firstly, it was needed to separate the lounges before departure and after arrival from and to Schengen and outside Schengen, to adjust the passport control and customs areas. The control focuses on so called outer Schengen borders and it is accompanied by cooperation of law enforcement agencies. One of the most important issues was to build sufficient comfort for concurrent serving both Schengen and non-Schengen passengers.

Implementation of these measures was connected with very high financial costs.

The regional airports encountered one very serious problem which was limited capacity of terminals. Owners of these airports tried to solve this by building new terminals and other administrative objects connected to the existing transport infrastructure. In 2006, a new terminal was opened at the regional airport Brno – Tuřany, costing CZK 237 million and the capacity of 3 million passengers a year. Similarly, a new terminal was opened in Ostrava – Mošnov airport in 2006, which was built for CZK 350 million and has capacity of 1.5 million served passengers a year. In Karlovy Vary, a new terminal for CZK 92.5 million with capacity of 500 000 served passengers a year. Since 2018, a new terminal in Pardubice airport is in operation. It was built with costs of CZK 256 million and has a capacity of 250 000 served passengers. Currently, a new terminal is being built at the airport České Budějovice – Planá, which now has a status of non-public airport. The estimated costs of the construction are CZK 408 million and the expected capacity will be up to 80 000 passengers a year.

Contemporary pressure on air transport from regional airports to the world is very significant and most of the airports are trying to form or extend their current portfolio of new regular lines. Typical air carriers are not very interested in flying to regional airports which is related to their worries to be able to make such a use of planes so that operation on these lines would be profitable.

In 2017, at all regional public international airports, i.e. in Brno, Ostrava, Pardubice and Karlovy Vary the unfavourable declining trend was reversed and more passenger were served that year than in 2016. The performance related to served passengers at regional airports is largely influenced by charter flights.

In 2017 at the airport Brno – Tuřany, they managed to halt the decline of passengers, which started in 2015. The number of served passengers in 2017 increased by 12% to 470 000. Demand for holiday destination grew most significantly. In the summer season, the airport served more than 260 000 passengers, out of which almost 100 000 travelled to or from Greece. The reason behind this growth are mainly charter flights or their variations such as regular seasonal lines to coastal resorts. Among the year-round regular lines served by Brno – Tuřany airports belong flights to London or Munich.

The charter flights are one of the main pillars for performance of the airport in Ostrava, where in 2017 the highest number of passengers over last nine years was recorder. The number of passengers grew by more than a quarter to 324 thousand. The most popular lines were those to London, Burgas, Milano, Prague and Heraklion. There were eighteen seasonal charter lines which were accompanied by four regular lines (to Prague, London, Milano and Dubai).

The airport in Pardubice served more than 88 000 passengers in 2017. In 2016 it was 31 thousand, which was the worst performance in last ten years. In 2017, Russian travel agencies returned to Pardubice, which order transport from Petersburg, Samara, Yekaterinburg, Ufa or Kazan. Apart from seasonal charter lines, there are also lines to London and Moscow.

The airport in Karlovy Vary served 20 034 passengers in 2017 which meant growth in number of served passengers by 3.9% in comparison with 2016. The decline in number of

passengers arriving to and departing from Russian federation caused by fall of flights of Czech Airlines to Moscow was compensated by new charter lines to Israel and Uzbekistan.

For comparison, the Václav Havel Airport served 15.4 million passengers, which meant 18% growth in comparison to 2016.

2.1 Arranging air transport

Air transport is ensured by three main business bodies – air carriers, airport and air traffic control bodies. When a new line is launched, all three bodies are involved. (2)

Air carriers operate the aeroplanes. Airports provide the air carriers with infrastructure for taxiing, landing and taking off, parking space, terminals for both passengers and cargo.

Air traffic control companies ensure safe movement of the planes. In one state, there is only one entity which can administer the safety of the air traffic. In international air transport, air traffic control entities and their air traffic controller of each involved country must cooperate very closely. Therefore, it was necessary to unite all procedures for smooth air traffic control, agree on the way of passing on the planes while in the air from one state to another to maintain high level of safety and save costs. For this reason, a company called EUROCONTROL was founded. (3)

Eurocontrol

EUROCONTROL – European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation coordinates activities of individual national air traffic control entities, helps with planning international flights, develops new procedures and technologies and organises training of the dispatchers. As a consequence of EUROCONTROL activities, a central organisation for air traffic flow above Europe CFMU –Network Management Unit, settled in Brussels, was established. It gathers all flight plans submitted in Europe. The air traffic controllers have exact knowledge of the planes and the times at which they are going to fly in their airspace. The growing accuracy of navigation tools enabled the Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM) in the upper airspace, which made it possible to raise the number of planes in upper airspace above Europe. The result is higher effectivity of air transport, lower demands on fuel, lower of air emissions, etc. Therefore, this system was implemented in many non-member countries.

Another result of EUROCONTROL activities was implementation of unified payments for using the air routes. Each operator of air transport pays for using the airspace depending on the length of the route and weight of the plane. The fees are collected by one central office, which further allocates the money to finance navigation tools or air traffic control entities, etc.

2.2 New Lines at regional Airport

Launching a new regular line is not only one-side process. Starting a new line always requires long-term preparation, which can last up to two years till the airport and the airline arrange operation of a new line. However, unsuccessful negotiations and consequent failure to start the operation of a new line are not rare.

The airports are very often in a very difficult situation when the airlines choose the airports because of the need to provide them with a support to start new lines. This support is often so great that the airport serves the aeroplanes for the prices which do not even cover their costs. The claims of the airports that they get their income also from different activities, such as parking, higher turnover of shops and services, are not usually true, because by the airports with lower number of passengers there is usually very low infrastructure which could provide the services at a required level, e.g. if Ostrava – Mošnov airport would serve 1,500,000 passengers a year, the airport would not need any support and would start being profitable.

Unfortunately for the passengers, who only use seasonal flights or flights operated by low-cost airlines, the price of the flight ticket is determinative and very often they are not

willing to pay for other services at the airport. On the other hand, the airport must invest into improving the infrastructure, e.g. nowadays the regional airports will have to invest a lot of money into safety. The result of a combination of investment needs and pressure of airlines is often a very bad economic situation of regional airports.

At the beginning of a new line start the setting of the destination, into which the airline wants to fly, and a financial analysis must be made. The financial analysis is the necessary tool of the financial management in market economies. Its main task is to provide information about financial health of the company. The company activities are recorded in company's accounting which can provide primary and often the main economic information but does not diagnose the company. The accounting must be followed by analysis of its results for which the usually accessible data are the main sources – balance sheet, profit and loss statement, cash flow, annual report, auditors' statements and internal data such as financial and managerial accounting and calculations.

For example, while deciding on launching a new line from the regional airport Ostrava – Mošnov, there was an ex ante analysis at the beginning. This analysis deals with the possibility to predict the development of company´s financial situation, its future solvency or insolvency. It is based on assessment and interpretation of current results where the symptoms of further development can be found. They are of different level and development of financial indicators presenting the picture of a real financial condition of the institution. The indicators of prospering companies are significantly different from those of bankrupting companies even years before the bankruptcy.

The following step is approval of European Committee. Regional airports, which want to launch a new line, have to submit an application at European Committee where they also have to submit their financial analysis, information on airspace, present and defend their decision to get an approval to start a new line at the required destination.

The reason why the period for launching a new line gets longer or why the airport eventually fails to have the line to the chosen destination could be troubles with gaining transport rights or so called slots for very busy airports. Allocation of slots in case of busy airports is usually decided by an independent organisation consisting of representatives of airlines and state administration. The whole process is very closely watched because the competition among the airlines is very fierce and allocation of slots can influence it very significantly. The immutable principles of allocating the slots are applied to maintain maximum level of neutrality.

In the preparation stage of launching a new line at the regional airport the flight business and marketing play a very significant role. For example, in Ostrava – Mošnov, they invested 300,000 CZK into marketing. Regional Authority of Morava-Silesia Region also contributed to supporting marketing. The most important promotion parts are destination marketing and hub promotion – the airport can be the one for changing to other lines. In the destination, to which the line would be operated, it is necessary to promote the region, including the reason, why it is advantageous to fly to the region and the interesting things the region can offer. The promotion material must be provided in the local language of the destination and also in English.

Once the airport prepares its financial analysis, it gains the slot of the required line to its destination and the line is approved by European Committee, it is needed to find the airline which would be interested in operating the line. Based on these facts, the so called international conferences of airlines and airports are held. The most important and greatest ones in the field of the route development planning is Routes Events organised by UBM Company. Its history goes back to 1995 when the first similar meeting of experts in the aviation took place.

At such meeting all participants have the same target. During several days they try to look for new opportunities at the air traffic market in the series of arranged twenty-minute

negotiations. The airports want to attract new customers or extend cooperation with the current ones, the airlines on the other hand, reveal their plans to the airports. At the same time, can run the presentations of less known companies which want to enter the air market.

Routes Events

It is not an individual conference, but a series of regional (Routes Europe, Routes Americas, Routes Africa, Routes CIS) and one world conference (World Routes). They are held throughout the year and are attended by representatives of airlines, airports and other entities with their interests in the particular geographical locations. The number of delegates is different – at the regional events the number of participants is in hundreds (Routes Europe 2014 was attended by record 1100 delegates, in April 2018 there were 1200 delegates from 100 airlines, 300 airports and 50 agencies involved in tourism).

The highlight of the whole year is World Routes conference, which is considered the most prestigious one. This year´s World Routes expect attendance up to 3000 delegates who will represent 300 airlines, 700 airports and 130 agencies involved in tourism.

The patronage above organisation on individual local conferences is held by particular airports and the town or region according to the venue of the event. Despite high costs of organizing such an event, it is always a great opportunity for presentation for the organizers.

For an airline the most important is the market potential of the planned route, expected number of passengers who will use the direct connection respectively. To get this information, the airlines can use Marketing Information Data Tapes (MIDT) which inform on the number of passengers who flew from point A to point B in any way – directly or with a change. These analyses about passengers which the airlines are interested in, can be bought. The price of such database is around CZK 1.5 million.

Before the launch of the new line, the airline must send relevant documents to the airport (air operator certificate, noise certificates, etc.) and both sides must sign a contract with exactly specified conditions – either payment conditions or operation conditions.

As small regional airports have troubles motivating air operators to operate the given line, they usually have very narrow negotiating space and very often they have to accept a mode which is economically favourable only for the air operator. For the airports, this brings conditions similar to dictatorship, which the airport must meet otherwise the operator would not fly to that airport. Under these conditions, the small regional airports are forced support the marketing activities of the operator, which must directly relate to the newly launched or current line or with a route where the frequency is about to be raised. These marketing activities can be for example, discounts on landing fees, handling, etc. Providing such discounts is standard, transparent and world widespread way of attracting new customers and motivate the current ones for better performances. No airport hides its fee policy and most of them publish the information on their websites.

However, everything depends on meeting a range of conditions which are very similar at most airports. For example, the new line must be operated during a certain period of time, it has to have some weekly frequency or certain level of occupancy of passengers.

In any case, the final decision on launching a new line (or its cancellation or change of frequency) always depends on the airline, which can in any stage of preparation or operation change the intention to start a new line or continue its operation.

Once the air operator signs the contract with the airport about launching a new line and the launch is not negatively affected by other factors (e.g. unexpected international political problems), a process with is ended by a ceremonial flight, is commenced. The period started by a successful negotiation and ended by the ceremonial flight can be very long and this also depends on the speed of communication between the two subjects.

If the regional airport wants to be attractive to gain new airlines, it still has to improve its services and support for operation. That means to have not only conditions for quick service for passengers and safety background, but also base of aeroplanes, i.e. parking for the planes, fuel supply and facilities for the crew. A great advantage could be a maintenance centre right at the airport which can provide help to the plane in case of any malfunction as well as implementing modern elements of serving and checking the passengers, transport infrastructure or minimalization of time needed for serving the plane.

The regional airports will undergo further changes. Now, they are expected to invest to improve their safety, which is required at the airports in Brno, Karlovy Vary, Ostrava and Pardubice. The state will invest CZK 585M into this project which should last about three years.

2.3 Current state at Ostrava – Mošnov airport

In 2016 there was a project of selection procedure for launching the lines from Ostrava to Amsterdam and Helsinki, which was organized by Moravia – Silesia Region. The region determined the exact number of rotations for the flight to Amsterdam (5 rotations a week) and Helsinki (3 rotations a week). Further on, the region also determined the times for departures and arrivals from and to Mošnov – the first one must depart between 5 and 8am and the last must arrive between 6 and 11 pm.

To help them with the commitment of public service in air transport issue, the Morava – Silesia Region invited law agency Císař, Češka, Smutný, s.r.o., which elaborated Justification of needs to imposition of commitment of public service at flight lines Ostrava – Helsinki and Ostrava – Amsterdam and possibilities of their compensation. The expected value of this public commission lasting for four years was CZK 600M (Ostrava – Helsinki CZK 244M, Ostrava – Amsterdam CZK 356M). During the application period, the deadline to submit proposals was postponed twice as there were no operators interested in operating these lines. The final date was eventually 15 August 2016 but there was no proposal anyway.

It was later revealed that the lack of interest in operating the lines was caused by the conditions of the selection procedure. The reasons of impossibility to meet the conditions were identified as follows:

- Lack of slots at the airports in Amsterdam and Helsinki. It was difficult to get a free slot for arrival in the morning hours (rush hours)
- Exact determination of days in which the lines should be operated – from Ostrava to Amsterdam – from Monday to Friday, from Ostrava to Helsinki – Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Determination of maximum flight duration to each destinations and the subsequent impossibility to use slower and thus cheaper place to transport the passengers
- Determination of minimal number of successive connections from Amsterdam to other destinations within three hours.

Based on these complications, Morava – Silesia Region proposed new conditions of the procedure. It would still be a commitment of public service at the lines to Amsterdam and Helsinki. To Amsterdam, they suggested 4 rotations a week without stating the days and hours. In terms of the line to Helsinki, they changed the requirements to 2 rotations a week. Also the requirements for maximum flight duration and minimal number of successive connections from Amsterdam were reduced. The region required a plane with pressurised cabin with capacity at least 40 seats.

Even after this repetitive selection procedure, the Morava – Silesia Region failed to find an airline which would operate the lines from Ostrava – Mošnov airport to Amsterdam and Helsinki. The deadline for submitting the proposals was changed twice – the last one was 31 October 2017 but ever under the reduced conditions, no airline took part.

By the end of October 2017 the region had paid the law agency Císař, Češka, Smutný, s.r.o. CZK 150,000 for legal support during the selection procedure for an airline. The region also paid the same company 258,000 for legal services connected to the intention to rent the airport to the private organisation. Even this plan of rent failed. Possible interested party, who were interested in renting the airport, wanted the realisation of the intended renovation of runaway. The estimated costs for the renovation of the runaway was CZK 2 billion if started within 3 years. This renovation brings complications and operation limits. The renovation will be sequential – firstly one third of the runaway would be closed, then another third at the other end and finally the central third would be renovated which will bring complete closure of the airport for two or three months.

Despite the failure to start new lines to Amsterdam and Helsinki added to the existing regular lines, the airport still invests large sums of money to its development and improvement of the services for the passengers. Now, departure lounge, which has the capacity of only 300,000 passengers a year is being renovated. Current airport management would like to increase the capacity up to 1,500,000 served passengers but the investment would have to be around CZK 300M.

Further development of this regional airport in Ostrava is seen in building and development of cargo terminal. Main philosophy is to be ready for the potential interested party. The airport management focuses on looking for possibilities to increase the volume of cargo air transport. There is a possibility of transporting goods produced in Morava – Silesia region within export or vice versa, the airport can become a hub for imported goods from China. For example, there is a huge amount of goods imported from China which customers buy on the Internet and part of it is already transported to the Central Europe by air. Big airports like Frankfurt, Paris or Vienna try to expand cargo transport but their capacity is about to be exhausted.

Despite the fact that regional airports are not very profitable, they bring secondary profits to the regions, e.g. in a form of tourism benefits. Unfortunately, this profit does not come back to its entrance gate – the airport.

3. STATISTICAL MODELS

This chapter will present several statistical models representing the relationship between passenger numbers at regional airports and the economic expression of purchasing power in the Moravian-Silesian, South Moravian and Pardubice regions. The purchasing power of the independent variable, the number of passengers will be dependent variable. Purchasing power will represent the average monthly wage in individual regions between 2013 and 2016. The time period before 2013 will not be considered, as air traffic performance at regional airports is often marked by considerable fluctuations.

Because the each regional airport does not disclose the number of passengers in a single structure, the statistical models do not have a uniform structure.

To determine the quality of the model will be use the index of determination identified in the statistical models symbol R ^ 2. As is known, the value of R ^ 2 is in the range <0, 1>. The higher the value R ^ 2 the better the model reflects the reality.

3.1 Statistical Models for Ostrava Regional Airports

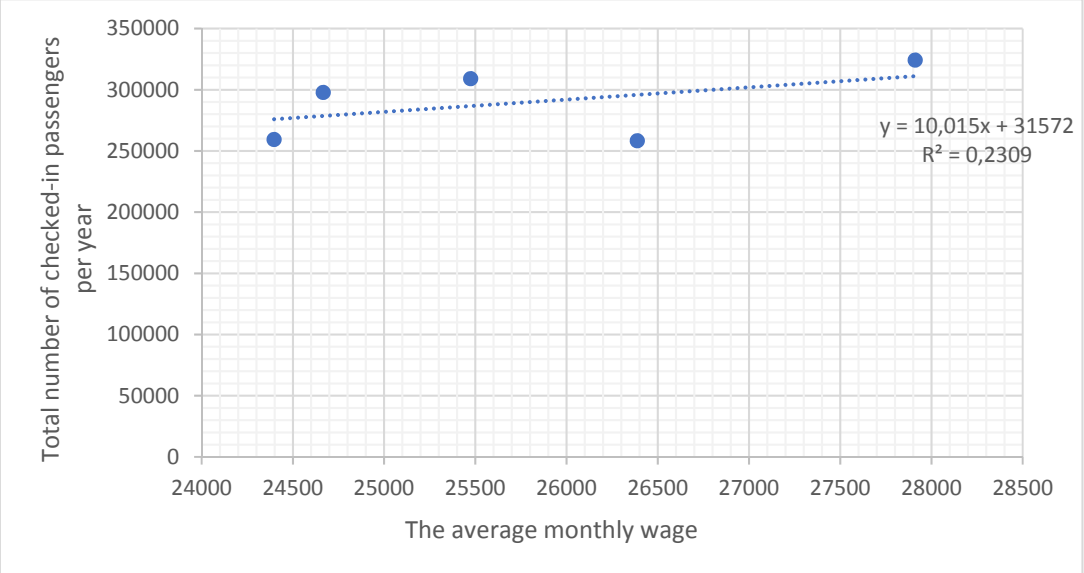
For the Ostrava Regional Airports will be presented 4 Statical Models. For this categorization is facilitated by the fact that the airports, in their annual reports, publish separately the numbers of checked-in passengers in national transport, regular international transport and irregular international transport.

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers per year are shown in Tab. 1 and Fig. 1.

Tab. 1 - The average monthly wage in the Moravian-Silesian Region and the total number of checked-in passengers per year at Ostrava Airport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers per year
2013	24397	259167
2014	24667	297691
2015	25475	308933
2016	26388	258223
2017	27911	324116

Source: Author



Source: Author

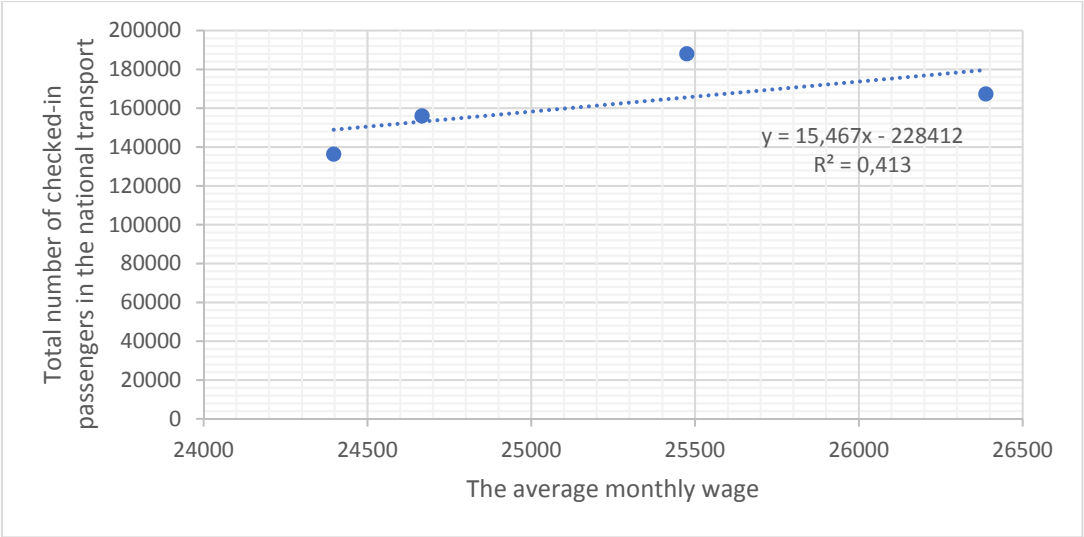
Fig. 1 - The statistical model for the total number of passengers at the Ostrava airport

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers in the national transport are shown in Tab. 2 and Fig. 2.

Tab. 2 The average monthly wage in the Moravian-Silesian Region and for the total number of checked-in passengers in the national transport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers in the national transport
2013	24397	25272
2014	24667	29411
2015	25475	29453
2016	26388	25013

Source: Author



Source: Author

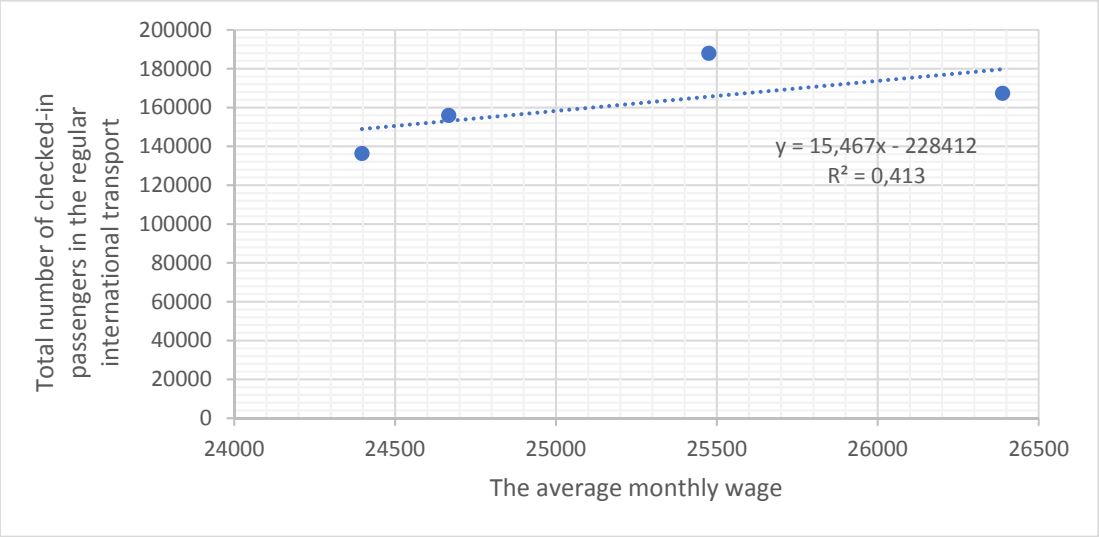
Fig. 2 - The statistical model for the total number of checked-in passengers in the national transport

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers in the regular international transport are shown in Tab. 3 and Fig. 3.

Tab. 3 - The average monthly wage in the Moravian-Silesian Region and for the total number of checked- passengers in the regular international transport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers in the regular international transport
2013	24397	136265
2014	24667	155924
2015	25475	187886
2016	26388	167269

Source: Author



Source: Author

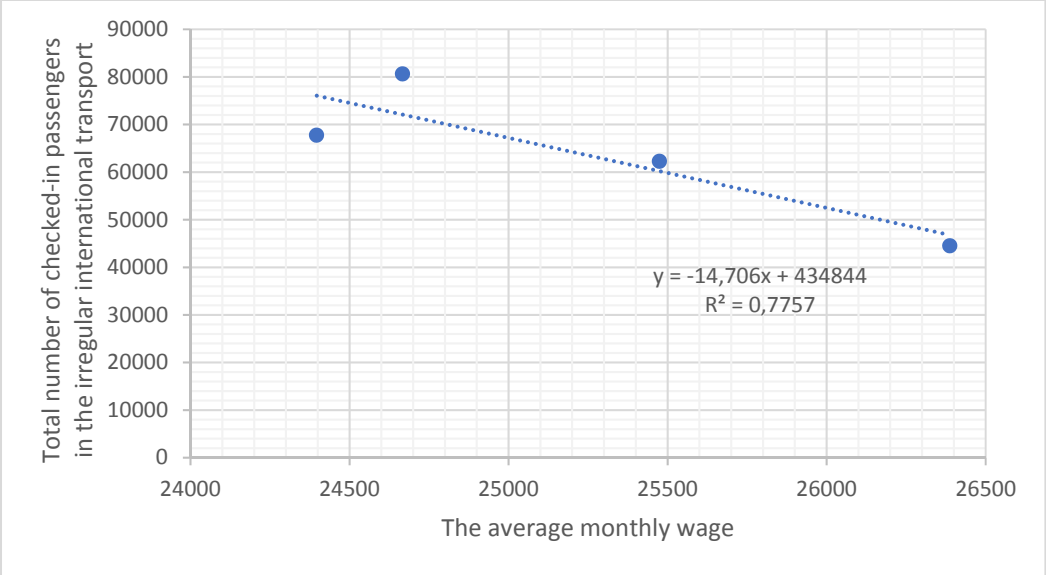
Fig. 3 - The statistical model for the total number of checked- passengers in the regular international transport

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers in irregular international transport are shown in Tab. 4 and Fig. 4.

Tab. 4 - The average monthly wage in the Moravian-Silesian Region and for the total number of checked-in passengers in irregular international transport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers in the irregular international transport
2013	24397	67753
2014	24667	80604
2015	25475	62248
2016	26388	44512

Source: Author



Source: Author

Fig. 4 - The statistical model for the total number of checked- passengers in the irregular international transport

3.2 Statistical Models for Brno Regional Airports

For the Brno Regional Airports will be presented 3 Statical Models. For this categorization is facilitated by the fact that the airports, in their annual reports, publish only separately the total numbers of checked-in passengers, total numbers of checked-in passengersin in regular transport and total numbers of checked-in passengersin in irregular transport.

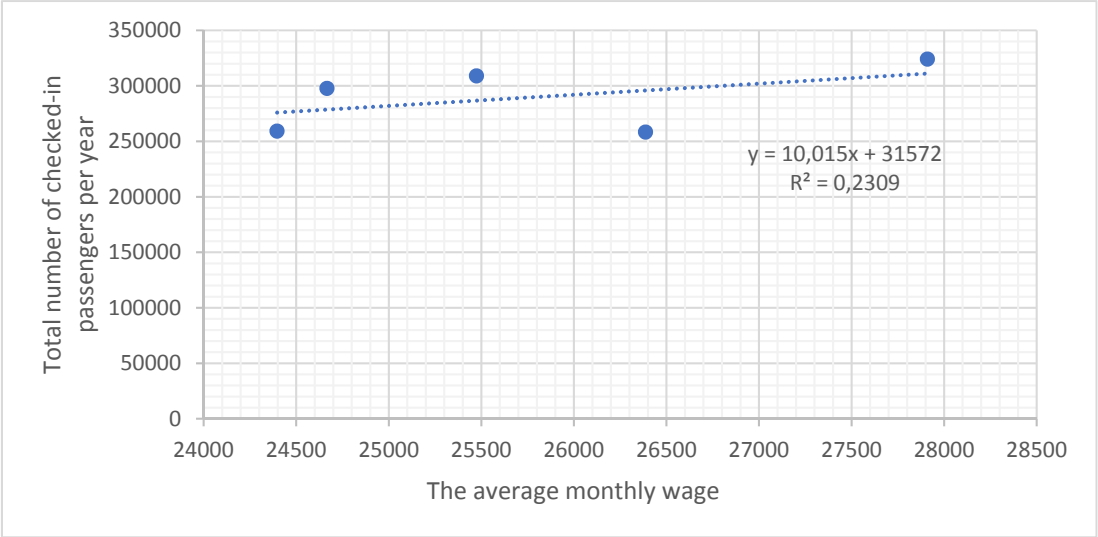
The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers per year are shown in Tab. 5 and Fig. 5.

Tab. 5 - The average monthly wage in the South Moravian Region and the total number of checked-in passengers per year at Brno Airport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers per year
2013	24397	259167

2014	24667	297691
2015	25475	308933
2016	26388	258223
2017	27911	324116

Source: Author



Source: Author

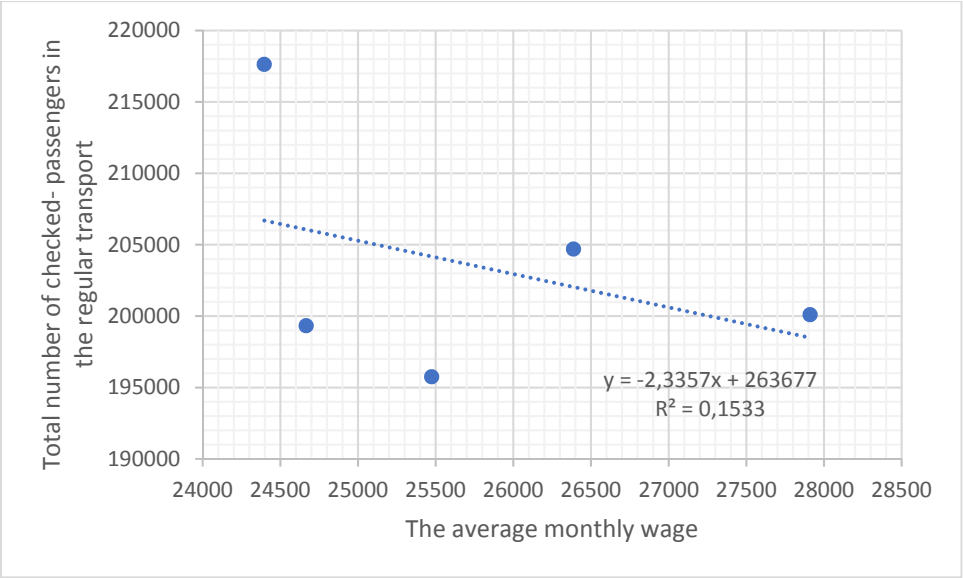
Fig. 5 - The statistical model for the total number of passengers at the Brno airport

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers in the regularl transport are shown in Tab. 6 and Fig. 6.

Tab. 6 - The average monthly wage in the South Moravian Region and for the total number of checked- passengers in the regular transport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked- passengers in the regular transport
2013	24397	217621
2014	24667	199315
2015	25475	195739
2016	26388	204685
2017	27911	200092

Source: Author



Source: Author

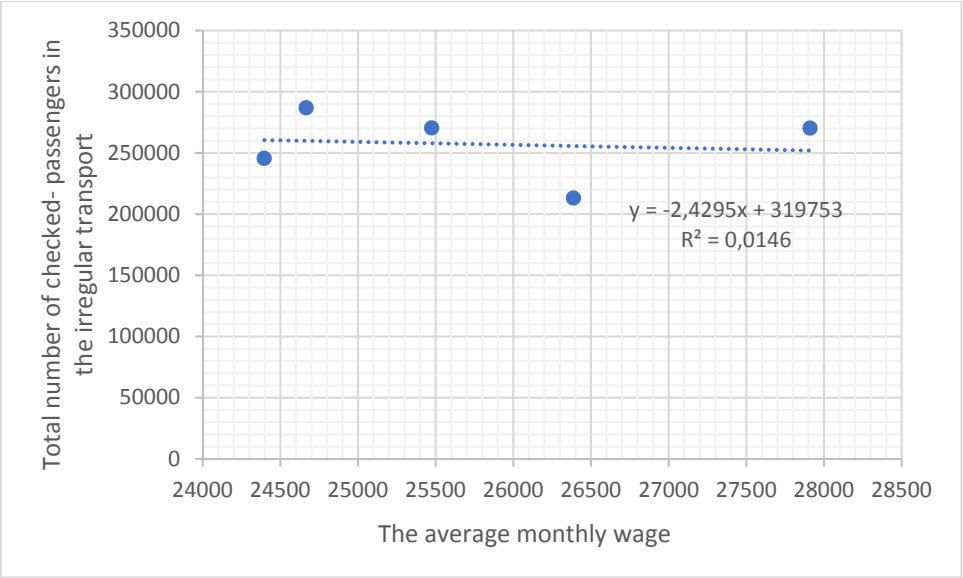
Fig. 6 - The statistical model for the total number of checked- passengers in the regular transport

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers in the irregular transport are shown in Tab. 7 and Figure 7.

Tab. 7 - The average monthly wage in the South Moravian Region and for the total number of checked-in passengers in the irregular transport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked- passengers in the irregular transport
2013	24397	245402
2014	24667	286819
2015	25475	270307
2016	26388	213040
2017	27911	270193

Source: Author



Source: Author

Fig. 7 - The statistical model for the total number of checked- passengers in the irregular transport

3.3 Statistical Models for Pardubice Regional Airports

For the Pardubice Regional Airports will be presented only 1 Statical Model. This airports publish, in annual reports, only the total numbers of checked-in passengers per year.

The results of the statistical survey for the total number of checked-in passengers per year are shown in Tab. 8 and Fig. 8.

Tab. 8 - The average monthly wage in the Pardubice Region and the total number of checked-in passengers per year at Pardubice Airport

Year	The average monthly wage [CZK. Month-1]	Total number of checked-in passengers per year
2013	23187	184140
2014	23879	150056
2015	24856	59260
2016	26087	31174
2017	28006	88490

Source: Author

Source: Author

Fig. 8 - The statistical model for the total number of passengers at the Pardubice airport

CONCLUSION

The owners of the regional airports try to do their best for improving the development of their airports and for starting new lines. However, it is not easy to go through the whole process of approval of a new line to required destinations and it also is not easy to find an airline who would subsequently operate the line to the required destinations.

Apart from the regional airports Brno – Tuřany, Ostrava – Mošnov, Karlovy Vary, Pardubice and currently arising (so far non-public) airport in České Budějovice, also the airport in Hradec Králové has big plans for development and they are working on a project to convert this airport into an international one.

If both the airports in Hradec Králové and České Budějovice finalize their plans, there will be seven international airports in the Czech Republic (including Prague) which will be able to accept flights from the whole world and also provide flights to the whole world. The question is if it is not too many and if there are airlines which will want to operate flights from and to these airports.

The airports are very often in difficult situations when the airlines choose the airports which offer support for launching new lines. This support is often so great that the airport serves the aeroplanes for the prices which do not even cover the costs. The claims of the airports that they get their income also from different activities, such as parking, higher turnover of shops and services, are not usually true, because the airports with lower number of passengers there is usually very low infrastructure which could provide the services at a required level. Also the passengers, who only use seasonal flights or flights operated by low-cost airlines, the price of the flight ticket is determinative and very often they are not willing to pay for other services at the airport. On the other hand, the airport must invest into improving the infrastructure. The result of a combination of investment needs and pressure of airlines is often a very bad economic situation of regional airports.

In the final part of the article is being investigated the influence of the purchasing power of the region on the number of passengers. In order to assess the real impact of the purchasing power of the region's population on the number of checked-in passengers, it would be have to possible obtain from the airport's statistical data the numbers of checked-in passengers from the specific region. But this information in annual reports is not published.

Another problem is that airports do not publish numbers of checked-in passengers in a single structure. Therefore, the statistical models have not a single structure. The results of the static models that have been produced show that there is not much statistical dependence between the number of checked-in passengers per year and the purchasing power of the population in the region. In this context, we can expect with purchasing power increasing, increasing to number of passengers who will be use air transport. For this reason, it is advisable to deal with this issue further and above all to look for ways in which types of economic variables will exhibit a higher degree of statistical dependence.

The reasons for this discrepancy may be vary. For example, it is important to consider that all regional airports have significant air hubs nearby - for example, Brno airport is located in the catchment area of Vienna airport, Ostrava airport is located in the catchment area of Katowice airport and Pardubice airport is located in the catchment area of Prague airport. Even this may be the reason that with the increasing average wage in the region, the number of checked-in passengers does not increase in the same way, even in some cases, it is even declining.

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