

WHAT AFFECTS THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THE WEB? CASE OF CZECH RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

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Abstract

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Electronic information availability has become an innate part of public corporate governance on all levels of public administration. Given paper focuses on such availability made throughout a platform of municipal website. Firstly, the paper objective focuses on identification of current level of web information openness. Secondly, it aims on examination of factors affecting the level of openness. Primary data on the information openness were gathered through the website analysis of randomly selected municipalities (n = 400) with population up to 2,000 inhabitants.

The findings showed that majority of municipalities operate functional website (97%). Worse situation was found in provision of information about local politicians (particularly their contact details) and the office (official mail, e-mail and telephone). The openness in economic transparency is satisfactory regards to publishing of municipal documents and its extent; however not as good situation is in openness of public procurement description.

Research hypothesis examination confirmed that information openness is positively associated with municipal population, wealth of the municipality and lack of municipal debt; on the other hand the information openness is not influenced by belonging of the municipality to certain region neither personality of the mayor.

Keywords: Czech Republic, public governance, provision of information, municipality, openness, website

1 INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, modern public governance is steadily more and more affected by informational and communicational changes in the society. Information management is a critical part of every current standard of public administration (OPM and CIPFA, 2004; Salamon, 2002; Osborne, 2006; Hall and Kennedy, 2008). A new relation between administration and society has been developed, involving greater transparency and citizen participation. Publishing of information on the web on one hand increases credibility and transparency of public institutions and preventing from corrupt practices, and on the other hand develops comfort of citizens (customers) of the municipality (i.e. Morris and Shin, 2002; Matei and Matei, 2011).

Public authorities should publicly define its purpose and specify outputs delivered to citizens and service users. Moreover, the released information is necessary to promote the values of organization and ensure that managers behave according to the values they hold, perform their management effectively, including executing of informed and transparent decisions. Information disclosure is already built into very essence of Good governance standards implementation. As the governance is considered to be rather the opposite of government (Rhodes 1996; Smutek 2009), the citizens should be involved in such governing and therefore information should be spread out publicly.

The public sector authors increasingly speak of the so-called virtualization. Margetts (2005) states, that virtualization can be understood on three levels:

- 1) Virtual face, the government organization becomes virtual in terms of its relationships with clients (e.g.: businesses, citizens) who deal only with some kind of virtual image of an organization, rather than organizations themselves.
- 2) Internal virtuality, which represents of not really having any central existence. Virtual organization lacks what it traditionally takes to be an organization (e.g.: bureaucracy is replaced by information systems, many activities are outsourced, etc.).
- 3) Virtual networks, whereby organizations exist only as consortia of groups and individuals grouped together for a particular reason – linkages are more important than organizations and the network of individuals and organizations is the most important of all.

Dunleavy and Margetts (1999) consider formation of web technologies and web information systems as a critical and breakage point in the virtual organization development. "A web site follows the possibility of all kinds of transactions that would originally have been processed within an organization being processed by the web site alone. As one official in the Australian Tax Office put it in 1999, in the future 'this organization will become its Web site'".

However, there are many factors affecting the nature of information published on the website in any organization, not excluding the public institutions, the public sector is heavily influenced by legal requirements defining the amount and quality of the information published on the web. In the European Union is provision of information primarily determined by legislation as the act on Free access to information (No. 106/1999), directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on The Re-use of public sector information (No. 2003/98/EC) and act on the Protection of personal data (No. 101/2000). These regulations outlines for example obligations of the municipality as prescribed structure and content of information, availability of documents for re-use in all formats, where possible and appropriate, the material should be available in electronic form, practical tools to help find the materials available for re-use, this should be a list of information sources or information portals, and also define the rules for the protection of personal data of citizens.

As follows the decree No. 442/2006 it determines exact structure of the information as well as the extent to be published on the municipality website. It differentiates among basic, extended, and complete information, explained in greater detail further:

- a) *Basic information* about the organizational structure of the office, contact connection (postal address, office hours, telephone numbers, web address or the address of e-mail), bank details and the identification numbers, documents lists the major conceptual, strategic and programmatic in nature, budget, information requests, remedies, list of used forms, descriptions of procedures for dealing with life situations, the most used rules and regulations issued, and payments for the provision of information and licences.
- b) *Extended information* about with and whom you can deal with life situations, according to which the law proceeds in this case, what remedies are and how to apply, whether the information about the procedure may be obtained from other sources and related life situations and the way how to solve them.
- c) *Complete information* on the subject name and the reason and method of establishment, labelling laws related to life situation, selected questions and other information on living situation, marking the department responsible for accuracy of a given life situation, contact person and the date from which a given situation applies.

Ten Commandments of open municipality (Kužílek, 2011) states that the law expressly directs to publish a minimum for entry: the number of council members present approved the agenda, course and outcome of the vote and adopted a resolution (according to § 95, paragraph 1 of Act on municipalities). Reasonably conceived report, however, should also show who and how to discuss things, what the arguments presented, and how and who voted. Publish should be also missed the resolution because of their apparent variations between what was decided.

Although the law does not mandate explicitly publish documents, it can be stated that the resolution of the council, and where appropriate, the records of their meetings, might be assign the term "principal documents" list of the municipality is obliged to publish on its Web site under § 5, paragraph 2, point b of Act No. 106/1999 on Free access to information. Minutes and resolutions of the municipal bodies is the next budget and development plan perhaps the most important documents, expresses events in the village. They show there are problems that solve community, views that are expressed or interests of particular groups of citizens. In terms of efficiency and savings in labor and in terms of good practice and the quality of public administration is far better to resort to actively publicize these documents. Research of Otevřená společnost (2009), made on the data sample of 171 public institutions, showed that 89% of them publish council resolutions, 26% council minutes, and 73% resolution of the board.

The main objective of paper is twofold. Firstly, it deals with identification of current level of web information openness of Czech small municipalities. Secondly, it is aiming on identification of factors affecting this level of that openness. Therefore five research questions were developed, and where appropriate, formulated hypotheses in the frame of these questions.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis

In order to fulfill previously explained aims of the article, following research questions (RQ) were formulated: RQ1: What is the basic information openness of Czech rural municipalities?; RQ2: How much is the information openness influenced by the municipality population?; RQ3: How much is information openness affected by the municipality jurisdiction to certain region?; RQ4: How is information openness affected by the personality of the mayor? and RQ5: How is information openness affected by socio-economic situation of the municipality?

RQ1 was involved with regards to current absence of similar research studies. Only studies aiming on selected regions (Bachmann, 2010) or dealing with other public administration levels than municipalities (Komárková, Máchová, Bednaříková, 2008) exist. Because of such limitation, the hypotheses were not formulated in this research issue. The reasoning of question lies in setting basic knowledge on web information openness in rural municipalities. The web openness itself comprises of four main areas: municipal website accessibility, openness of local politicians, communication of the municipal office towards the citizens, and availability of documents on the activities of municipality management. Presence of such focus is supported by Thomas and Streib's (2003: 98) assertion that increasing availability of governmental information on the Web can by itself promote governmental openness and transparency.

RQ2 and others focus on factors affecting the web openness. Influence of municipality population is obvious, due to expectation, that with the increasing number of website "readers", the effort of website "producers" will be higher. Therefore the hypothesis was developed: H_{RQ2} : *Information openness of municipal website increases with higher population of the municipality.* Correlation between the score and population is going to be processed at first. Consequently, when the relationship will be sufficiently strong, the regression analysis will be performed.

RQ3 on regional difference in information openness is also necessary develop the hypothesis. Whereas no studies in the area were made yet, we assume no differences among regions. Therefore we establish hypothesis: H_{RQ3} : *There are no regional differences in the web information openness of municipalities.*

Verification of the hypothesis will be conducted through one-way ANOVA statistical calculation.

RQ4 is dealing with the mayor's personality and its influence on the openness. As the personality is highly vague term, we used two available data at least partially representing the mayor's personality: age and education. Therefore next hypotheses were formed: H_{RQ4a} : *Information openness declines with the increasing age of the mayor;* and H_{RQ4b} : *Information openness increases with the higher education of the mayor.* Hypothesis H_{RQ4a} is based on the assumption that older people have not sufficient abilities to acquire new information and communication technologies, which is supported by Matoušková and Vymazal's (2006) assertion that with the increasing age the ICT competencies are decreasing. Second hypothesis H_{RQ4b} is than in accordance to general benefits of education (for example Šedová, 2011).

RQ5 focus on socio-economic situation of the whole municipality as one of potential influencers of municipal openness. Socio-economic situation of the municipality is in this case given by an average age of the municipal population, the wealth (assets) of the municipality and the municipal debt. For these three factors were developed hypotheses as follows: $H5a$: *Information openness increases with the decreasing average age of municipal population,* $H5b$: *Information openness increases with higher municipal property,* and H_{RQ5c} : *Information openness increases with lower municipal debt.* Hypothesis H_{RQ5a} is based on the already mentioned assumption made by Matoušková and Vymazal (2006). Hypotheses H_{RQ5b} is than justified by assertion of Christiaens (1999) as he argues that municipal wealth should be positively related to openness in sharing information as a signal of the management quality. The last hypothesis H_{RQ5c} is implicitly resulting from Christiaens (1999).

2.2 Research Sample

Research sample consists of 400 Czech rural municipalities ($N = 400$) randomly selected from the basic set of all Czech municipalities with population lower than 2,000 inhabitants. The simple random sampling represents a sample chosen from a larger set. Each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, and each subset of k municipalities has the same probability of being chosen for the sample as any other subset of k municipalities.

The limitation of 2,000 inhabitants was chosen with regard to the settlement structure typical for the Czech Republic. Czech Statistical Office (2009) and Perlín (1999) suggest that the conventional limit of 2,000 inhabitants of the village is undoubtedly set for a typical Czech settlement structure. In some European countries, this conventional viewpoint of rural municipality is set to a size of 5,000 inhabitants.

Gathering the data was realized with the use of coders. Scherer (2004) states, that the coder is an associate of the analyst that conducting surveys

and records it. Involvement of coders in research has a positive effect on the quality of survey, such as reducing the risk that the results will be too influenced by the subjective view of the author. The author is forced to make transparent the reasoning, because coders must transmit his intentions. For the realization of survey were used four coders to acquire data within February 2012 to May 2012 using search engines Google and LiveSearch, thus the results are valid for this period.

2.3 Content Analysis as the Main Method

The study exploits the form of the content analysis conducted through the Internet to identify information openness of Czech municipalities. In this case Hewson (2007) talks about so called Interned mediated research and document analysis performed in an internet research context. Such document analysis is similar to some forms of observation, but the records are primarily placed on www with certain purpose. In this case is quantitative measurement considered as too ambiguous, because the quantity of provided data often does not match to quantity of provided information and websites can contain data with none or little information value (titles and headings, logos, banners, pictures, etc.). It is also obvious that the amount of information provided on the site will grow with a number of municipal citizens.

Therefore, the quantitative approach was rejected and presence of the twenty carefully selected information has been studied. The information

was gathered in four main areas as it follows: A. Openness of local politicians and representatives; B. Communication of the Municipal office with the Citizen; C. Documents displaying the municipal management activities and its main decisions; and D. Accessibility of municipal web presentation. Obtained information are listed and grouped in Tab. I.

RESULTS

3.1 RQ1: What is the Basic Information Openness of Czech Rural Municipalities?

Four main areas of interest were examined to identify the basic level of the information openness:

- A. Website accessibility;
- B. Openness of local politicians and representatives;
- C. Communication of the Municipal office with the citizens; and
- D. Documents displaying the municipal management activities and its main decisions.

Only elementary data are presented to keep the paper consistency on finding of both situation in given area and factors affecting the openness to publish information.

A. Website Accessibility

The functional and accessible website was found in 388 of 400 municipalities included in the research sample, i.e. 97%. The maximal population

I: *Municipal information examined on the given website through content analysis*

A) <i>Website accessibility</i>
1. Functional website
2. Intuitive web address
3. BFW
4. Search
5. Advanced search
B) <i>Openness of local politicians (mayor and local representatives)</i>
6. Name of the mayor
7. Names of the representatives
8. Telephone of the mayor
9. E-mail of the mayor
10. Telephone/e-mail of the local representatives
C) <i>Communication of the Municipal office towards to citizens</i>
11. Address of the municipal office on the main page
12. Telephone and e-mail of the municipal office on the main page
13. Office hours
14. Discussion forum
15. The municipal newsletter
D) <i>Documents on the activities of municipality management</i>
16. Resolutions of the municipal council are available
17. Minutes from the municipal council meetings are available
18. Voting of councillors is present in the minutes and available
19. Procurement notification and decision is available
20. Detailed description on the course of procurement is available

Source: Authors

of the municipality with no website was 718 inhabitants; conversely the minimal population was 60 people. However, the accessibility was influenced by other web features as web address structure, blind friendly web adjustment, and search options, so these were examined too. Structure of the address is one component of website findability. "Otherwise, even if you have a top-notch web site, it won't do you much good unless people can find it." (Pressel, 2010, p. 291).

Less than two thirds of municipalities have the address in the structure of the name of the municipality and .CZ domain, next one fifth than have some text before the name and domestic domain. 13% of the municipalities have really no intuitive address as the name of the municipality is not present in that one. Blind friendly web, which is important from the side of equal opportunity code of conduct towards to municipal citizens, is available in 76 municipalities of 400, i.e. in almost one fifth (19%). Searching and advanced searching is than crucial when citizens are looking for the specific information within the website of their municipality. Search option was offered in 286 cases (72%); the advanced search was than available in 93 websites (23%).

B. Openness of Local Politicians

Web pages may serve as a communication mediator in between the municipal management and local citizens. Therefore the availability of contact details on mayor and municipal representatives was assessed. Name of the mayor was found as the most frequently published information as it was present in 372 cases of 400 (93%). Besides of this there was a phone contact on the mayor in more than half of cases (216 of 400; 54%); an e-mail contact in 120 municipalities of 400 (30%). Situation among municipal representatives was found slightly worse. The representatives' names were published in 340 of 400 (85%); and only in 27 cases of 400 (7%) was mentioned a representatives' contact (e-mail and/or phone number).

C. Communication of the Municipal Office Towards its Citizens

Presence of online and offline communication tools can be understood as one of important aspects of the municipal agency's openness. Among assessed communication tools were contact details of municipal office, opening hours, discussion forums, and presence of municipal newsletter. Official municipal office' address is not available on the main Web page in more than half of communities (187; 47%); however 167 of 400 municipalities (42%) present not only an official address, but also an official e-mail and telephone. Opening hours were present in 355 municipalities of 400 (89%); while more than half of agencies (221, 55%) have opening hours divided partly during mornings and afternoons of the weekdays. Exactly one tenth of municipalities communicate

with citizens via Internet discussion forum. Conversely, much higher portion of villages published their municipal newsletter 161 (40%); in 110 municipalities of 161 (68%) is the newsletter compiled solely of the views of municipal management and representatives and only in about one third (51 municipalities, 32%) are included also opinions of the citizens.

D. Documents on the Activities of Municipal Management

The presence of the documents illustrating activities of municipal management was the last among the examined information openness areas; it included availability of municipal council resolutions, minutes of the council meetings, records on councillors' voting and public procurement and its description.

More than one quarter (108 of 400; 27%) of municipalities published only their resolution from the council meetings. The same information plus records of the minutes of the meetings was available in 68 municipalities (17%). Full information on the meetings, it means resolutions, records of minutes as well as voting of individual councillors was than available in almost one third of communities (119; 30%). The worse situation, in general, was found in the area of public procurement. Procurement notification and decision was accessible in 46 municipal websites (11.5%); however only 14 of these 46 municipalities provided complete description of the notification as well as details on the proceeded operations and 32 municipalities published only the decision of public order assignment. Municipal contract with other entities in the full text was published only in 26 municipalities.

Results in detail and the descriptive statistics of all given variables are depicted in Tab. II.

3.2 RQ2: How Much is the Information Openness Influenced by the Municipality Population?

Obviously, can be expected that with the increasing number of website "readers", the effort of website "producers" will be higher. Therefore the following hypothesis was developed: Information openness of municipal website increases with higher population of the municipality. Firstly, the correlation between two considered variables – score of the openness to information sharing and the municipality population – was found. Tab. III illustrates results of parametric Pearson Correlation (value 0.341) as well as of nonparametric correlations such as Kendall's τ_b (value 0.265) and Spearman's ρ (value 0.387). All coefficients show correlation significant at the 0.01 level.

Besides this, the correlation between the municipality population and individual components of information openness was made. Results showed that the biggest correlation

II: Descriptive statistics of variables in the area of the website accessibility

N = 400	Mean	The mean error	Standard deviation	Variance
WEB ACCESSIBILITY				
existence of the web	0.9500	0.010911	0.218218	0.047619
intuitiveness of the address	0.8275	0.018914	0.378288	0.143102
BFW	0.1875	0.019540	0.390801	0.152726
search	0.5350	0.024970	0.499398	0.249398
advanced search	0.2250	0.020905	0.418105	0.174812
OPENNESS OF POLITICIANS				
name of the mayor	0.9500	0.010911	0.218218	0.047619
contact the mayor	0.9225	0.013386	0.267718	0.071673
names of councilors	0.8475	0.017998	0.359955	0.129568
contact councilors	0.0675	0.012560	0.251200	0.063102
COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS				
mailing address ¹⁾	0.4350	0.024819	0.496378	0.246391
office hours	0.8775	0.016414	0.328273	0.107763
discussion Forum	0.1000	0.015019	0.300376	0.090226
municipal newsletter	0.4000	0.024526	0.490511	0.240602
DOCUMENTS ON ACTIVITIES				
resolution of council	0.7250	0.022354	0.447073	0.199875
minutes of council	0.4650	0.024970	0.499398	0.249398
voting of councilors	0.2975	0.022887	0.457731	0.209518
procurement notification/decision	0.1150	0.015971	0.319421	0.102030
procurement (detailed description)	0.0350	0.009200	0.184010	0.033860

¹⁾ Official mailing address of the municipal office presented on the main page

Source: Authors

III: Correlations between the openness overall weighted score and municipality population

Correlations (Municipality population) (N = 400)	Overall Weighted Score
Pearson Correlation	,341**
Kendall's tau_b	,265**
Spearman's rho	,387**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors

IV: Linear regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,341 ^a	,116	,114	6,11652	,116	52,291	1	398	,000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Municipality Population

b. Dependent Variable: Overall Weighted Score

Source: Authors

is in the area of communication of the office towards to citizens (value 0.304). Conversely, the lowest correlation is between population and the accessibility of the website. Therefore it is shown, that bigger municipalities are able to proof better communication with the citizens (via newsletters, discussion forums, contact details and office hours), but there are not large differences in own existence of the site (functioning, intuitiveness, or searching options).

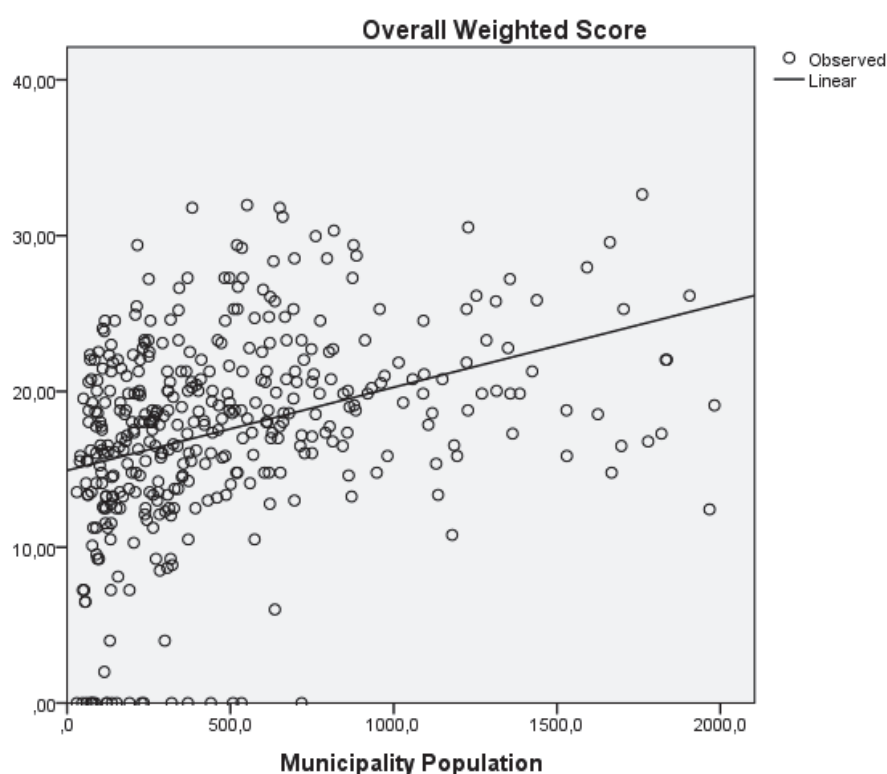
As the correlation between overall score and information openness was shown, the regression model was created. Model summary illustrated in Table IV suggests no linear regression between two considered variables.

The Fig. 1, depicting distribution of the openness score in individual municipalities, however shows

the majority of villages with population to 500 inhabitants reach score in between 10 to 25 points on 40 points maximal scale and furthermore slightly higher values with the increasing municipal population.

3.3 RQ3: How Much is Information Openness Affected by the Municipality Jurisdiction to the Certain Region?

However, the web information openness of the public institutions is a new topic in the central Europe, there are not available data on its scattering in the regions. Therefore, no differences in regions were assumed and hypothesis *There are no regional differences in the information openness* formulated. For clarification we used one-way ANOVA statistical calculation, the results are illustrated in Tab. VI.



1: Regression of information openness score and the municipality population
Source: Authors

V: ANOVA – regional differences in the information openness

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total score	Between Groups	(Combined)	732,464	12	61,039	1,466	,134
		Linearity	9,997	1	9,997	,240	,624
		Deviation from Linearity	722,467	11	65,679	1,577	,103
	Within Groups		16113,740	387	41,638		
	Total		16846,204	399			

Source: Authors

As the results showed, no significant statistical differences were found. Interestingly, the highest total score was recorded in regions Moravskoslezský and Ústecký; the most underdeveloped regions in terms of unemployment rate and GDP growth. Similarly, the worst score was found in Středočeský region, the most developed area in the Republic (the Prague was not involved in the research).

3.4 RQ4: How is Information Openness Affected by the Personality of the Mayor?

Mayor's personality can be partly derived from his age and education. Therefore two hypotheses were formed in the frame of the fourth research question.

Hypothesis a: Information openness decreases with increasing age of the mayor. Hypothesis is based on the assumption that older people have not sufficient willingness to acquire new skills in area of information and communication technologies, which is supported by Matoušková and Vymazal's

(2006) assertion that with the increasing age the ICT competencies are decreasing. The second *hypothesis b: Information openness increases with higher education of the mayor*, than resulting from general benefits of education (for example Šedová, 2011).

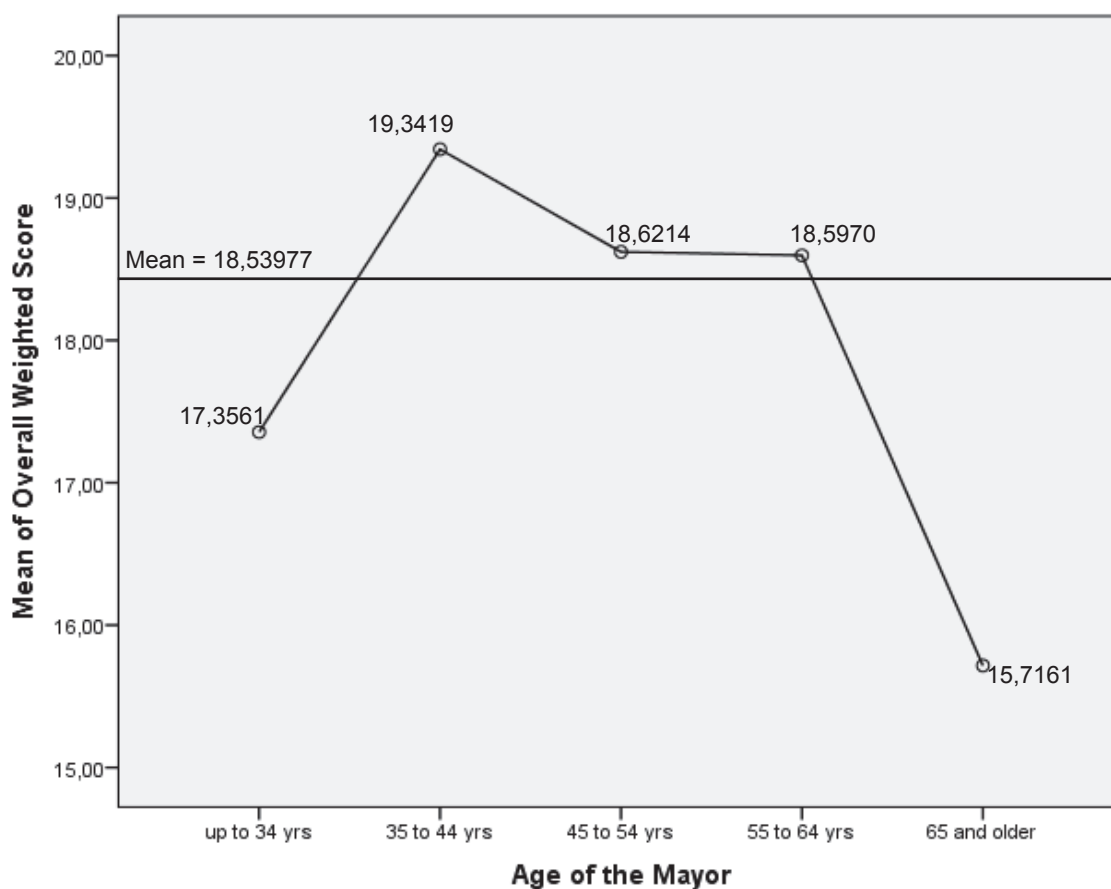
One-way ANOVA analysis was used to examine relationship between information openness and the age of the mayor. The results of descriptives statistics and the division into age categories is shown in Tab. VI and Fig. 2.

According to results it clear that null hypothesis on lowering openness with increasing age cannot be confirmed as it is. Nonetheless, research showed an interesting fact of lower openness of younger mayors that does not have to be associated with the ICT skills, but rather with the lack of management experiences at all. On the other hand there is a clear decline of the score after mayor's achievement of retired age. Processing of statistical data also showed statistically significant differences among

VI: Descriptive values of correlation between information openness (overall weighted score) and age of the mayors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Up to 34 yrs	35	17,35612	4,76946	0,80619	15,71775	18,99449	6,50000	28,53571
35 to 44 yrs	99	19,34199	5,25690	0,52834	18,29352	20,39046	8,67857	31,78571
45 to 54 yrs	132	18,62148	4,61862	0,40200	17,82623	19,41673	7,25000	31,96429
55 to 64 yrs	85	18,59706	5,42461	0,58838	17,42700	19,76712	4,00000	32,64286
65 and older	19	15,71617	6,01420	1,37975	12,81742	18,61492	2,00000	27,21429
Total	370	18,53977	5,11769	0,26606	18,01659	19,06294	2,00000	32,64286

Source: Authors



2: Illustration of results on dependence between information openness and the age of the mayor

Source: Authors

VII: Relationship between the mayor's education and the overall weighted score of information openness (descriptive variables)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Basic or secondary education	278	18,0686	5,09271	0,30544	17,4673	18,6699
Higher education	99	19,8344	5,15261	0,51785	18,8067	20,8621
Total	377	18,5323	5,16063	0,26578	18,0097	19,0549

Source: Authors

age categories according to tests of multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD test and Bonferroni test).

As the second characteristics of mayor's personality the education was examined. Therefore

the hypothesis b: *Information openness increases with the higher education of the mayor* was formulated. Significant difference in score of openness confirms the dependence on mayor's education and also

VIII: ANOVA – Relationship between the mayor's education and the overall weighted score of information openness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	227,629	1	227,629	8,723	0,003
Within Groups	9786,042	375	26,096		
Total	10013,67	376			

Source: Authors

this hypothesis as it is shown in Tabs. VII and VIII. However, the consequent F-test does not confirm the statistically significant difference.

3.5 RQ5: How is Information Openness Affected by Socio-economic Situation of the Municipality?

Socio-economic situation of the municipality is given by the average age of the municipal population, the municipal wealth (assets) and the amount of the municipal debt. Therefore following

three hypotheses were formulated. Hypothesis a: *Information openness increases with the decreasing average age of the municipal population.* This is based on the previously mentioned assumption made by Matoušková and Vymazal (2006). Hypothesis b: *Information openness increases with increasing wealth of the municipality* and hypothesis c: *Information openness increases with lower amount of the municipal debt.* These hypotheses b and c are justified by assertion of Christiaens (1999) as he argues that municipal wealth should be positively related

IX: ANOVA – Average age of the municipal population

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Average age of the municipal population	Regression	97,803	1	97,803	2,618	,106
	Residual	14828,944	397	37,353		
	Total	14926,747	398			
Municipal wealth	Regression	802,568	1	802,568	22,448	,000
	Residual	14229,448	398	35,752		
	Total	15032,016	399			
Amount of the municipal debt	Regression	390,427	1	390,427	10,613	,001
	Residual	14641,589	398	36,788		
	Total	15032,016	399			

Source: Authors

X: Correlation between socio-economic indicators and information openness

		Average age of the municipal population	Municipal wealth	Amount of the municipal debt	Overall weighted score of information openness
Average age of the municipal population	Pearson Correlation	1	-,158**	-,125*	-,081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002	,013	,106
	N	399	399	399	399
Rate of unemployment	Pearson Correlation	-,102*	,007	,025	-,004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,041	,896	,621	,935
	N	399	400	400	400
Number of inhabitants	Pearson Correlation	-,234**	,743**	,584**	,336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	399	400	400	400
Municipal wealth	Pearson Correlation	-,158**	1	,692**	,231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002		,000	,000
	N	399	400	400	400
Amount of the municipal debt	Pearson Correlation	-,125*	,692**	1	,161**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,013	,000		,001
	N	399	400	400	400

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** Correlation is sig. at the 0.01 level.

Source: Authors

to openness in sharing information as a signal of the management quality.

Result of "average age of the municipal population" is $p = 0.106 > 0.05$, it means that between the averages of tested groups there is no statistically highly significant difference. Result of "municipal wealth" is $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, it means that between the averages of tested groups there is statistically highly significant difference. Result of "amount of the municipal debt" is $p = 0.001 < 0.01$, it means that between the averages of tested groups there is statistically highly significant difference.

In the previous Tab. X is shown that the correlation between „overall weighted score of information openness“ and other factors „number of inhabitants“, „municipal wealth“, „amount of the municipal debt“ is significant at the 0.01 level.

There can be found some other positive or negative correlations. Negative correlation is between „average age of the municipal population“ and all other founded factors. It means that higher „average age of the municipal population“ has a positive impact on the „rate of unemployment“. The largest correlation is between „municipal wealth“ and „number of inhabitants“. One hypothesis about the „average age of the municipal population“ cannot be accepted, there is only a low negative correlation and the P value in ANOVA is high too.

Two hypotheses in this section can be found as true because the correlation shows following facts: Information openness increases with increasing wealth of the municipality; information openness increases with lower amount of the municipal debt.

4 DISCUSSION

Despite of the topic increasing importance only a few international studies questioning factors influencing both qualitative and quantitative aspects of information published by the public organizations (for example Gandía and Archidona, 2008). However, in case of given paper and its small community focus, the intensity of personal face-to-face contact should be considered, no regards to fact that this type of contact is only one-off, hard provable, immeasurable quality and available only to the given person. The opposite of this contact can be just right the municipal website. Information here is easy to find or search, with clear responsibility of the author, long-time present and accessible to wide auditorium in a previously defined quality and quantity. Czech environment is described by Pavel and Císařová (2008) considerations. They pinpoint the problem of creation of necessary conditions for economic decision making and effective performance of laic control. In terms of transparency it can be a serious comment on the formal fulfilment of legal conditions relating to the publication of budget documentation. Its appearance is in most cases user uncomfortable and for an economically illiterate citizen is almost incomprehensible. Institute of laic control application it than becomes a largely illusory issue. It can be assumed that this particular example stressing out the formalism and not the practical use of legislation is valid in general.

CONCLUSIONS

The first objective was to identify level of web information openness in rural municipalities. Findings show that the majority of municipalities own and operate functional and accessible website (97%). Slightly worse situation was identified in the possibility of contact to local politicians; the highest percentage of municipalities presented the name of mayor (93%), however only about half of them mentioned also a telephone contact (54%), and less than one third an e-mail address (30%). Much harder is to contact municipal councillors, as only 7% of municipalities provide e-mail and/or phone contact of them. Communication of the municipal office towards to its citizens was found as differentiated according to tools used by the offices. Reaching office by post, as well as electronically and telephone offered only less than half (42%) of the municipalities. About similar percentage of rural municipalities than provide electronic version of their newsletter (40%). Conversely, much less of villages, is able to communicate via discussion forums (10%). Regards to economic transparency, the openness in publishing documents illustrating the activities of municipal management might be considered as crucial. In the area of provision of documents there is on the one edge of the scale about one quarter of municipalities publishing only the resolution from the council meetings (27%), than around the similar percentage (30%) on the other edge provide full information (including resolutions, records of minutes, and voting of the councillors). The worse situation, in general, was found in the area of public procurement (only 14 of 46 municipalities provided complete description of the notification of public orders).

The second objective comprised identification of factors affecting the level of information openness. Examination of research questions and hypothesis confirmed that information openness (especially in the area of communication towards citizens) is slightly affected by the municipal population. Stronger positive correlation was found between the information openness and wealth of the municipality and naturally vice versa information openness increases with lower amount of the municipal debt. On the other hand the information openness is not influenced by belonging of the municipality to certain region neither personality of the mayor (although the age might be considered as important under certain conditions).

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