

TOURIST PERCEPTION AS KEY INDICATOR OF DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

The integrated tourist destination product creates the tourist experience, and its improvement contributes to destination competitiveness. Therefore, the tourist experience can be considered as fundamental for destination competitiveness. The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between the integrated destination product and destination competitiveness. The proposed approach is tested on the example of two destinations in the tourism region of Western Serbia: Bajina Basta and Prijepolje. In order to measure the visitors' perceptions of destination product, the survey method and t-test statistic were used. The obtained results confirmed a significant difference in the assessment of the integrated product of two destinations, which confirmed the starting hypothesis that the perception of the integrated destination product can be used as an indicator of tourist destination competitiveness.

Key words: tourist destination product, product elements, tourist perception, competitiveness.

ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈА ТУРИСТА КАО КЉУЧНИ ПОКАЗАТЕЉ КОНКУРЕНТНОСТИ ТУРИСТИЧКЕ ДЕСТИНАЦИЈЕ

Апстракт

Обједињени производ туристичке дестинације ствара туристички доживљај, а унапређење производа утиче на конкурентност дестинације. Сходно томе, доживљај туриста је фундаменталан за конкурентност туристичке дестинације. Циљ овог рада је да испита однос између обједињеног дестинацијског производа и њене конкурентности. Предложени приступ је тестиран на примерима две дестинације у Туристичкој регији Западна Србија: Бајина Башта и Пријеполје. У циљу мерења туристичког опажања дестинацијског производа, заснованог на туристичком доживљају при боравку у дестинацији, спроведена је анкета и упо-

требљена т-тест статистика. Добијени резултати потврђују значајну статистичку разлику у оценама обједињеног производа две дестинације, што је даље потврдило хипотезу да опажање о обједињеном производу туристичке дестинације, на основу доживљаја туриста, може бити коришћено као показатељ конкурентности туристичке дестинације.

Кључне речи: производ туристичке дестинације, елементи производа, туристичко опажање, конкурентност.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism records a dynamic growth and it has become very important for economies. Weaver and Lawton (2010, p. 55) point out that tourism has become an economic giant. Holloway, Humphreys and Davidson (2009, p.86, 189) believe that this is the most important single economy in the world. Tourism represents one of the most important factors of social and economic development (UNWTO, 2015).

The competitiveness of tourist destinations can be observed in the terms of the number of arrivals, overnight stays and tourist spending. It can also be measured based on the analyses of the employment factor (Wu, 2004) as a consequence of tourism development. It is also connected to the aspect of the productivity of tourism industry companies (Barros & Alves, 2004), and can be measured based on the value chain (Yilmaz & Bititci, 2006). Tourist perception, based on an experienced destination product, represents an important indicator of destination competitiveness.

Destination products have to be created in a way that assures the destination's long-term competitiveness and prosperity (Buhalis, 2000). The destination has to differentiate itself from its competitors or to be positively positioned in the minds of the tourism demand (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). It is necessary to be devoted to tourism development by creating an integrated destination product. The creation of a destination product should provide a better position on the market, based on the tourist demand preferences (Popescu, 2013). Therefore, the importance of a tourist is emphasized, since the tourists' choice defines what the destination product and destination in whole represents. Personal tourist experience, which can be considered as the fundamental tourism product (Stickdorn & Zehrer, 2009, p. 4; Popescu & Pavlovic, 2013, p. 200), becomes an important factor that can make an assessment of destination competitiveness.

This research establishes the basis for understanding the importance of the elements of the integrated destination product and examines the relationship between the perceived destination product and destination competitiveness. For the evaluation, the following elements of the destination integrated product were selected: attractiveness, accessibility,

and destination facilities and services (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, & Ranchold, 2009; Bakic, 2011; Popesku, 2013).

The proposed approach is tested on the example of two destinations in Serbia with different tourism performance: Bajina Basta and Prijepolje, which are selected based on their similar geographic characteristics, belonging to the same tourist region of Western Serbia, orientation to the same visitors of this region and with similar mutually competitive tourism products. Different performance between these destinations is reflected in the significantly different numbers of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the period between 2012 and 2014.

Literature review

The competitiveness of destinations is defined as the ability of a destination to deliver a more satisfying experience compared to other destinations (Vengesayi, 2003, p. 639) which implies that tourist experience is a fundamental product in tourism. Destination competitiveness mostly depends on the choices made by tourists in comparison to alternative tourist destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). Destinations need to develop the existing resources by using clear and effective strategies for developing tourism products and creating additional value of tourist experience (Popesku & Pavlovic, 2013).

The product is everything that can be offered on the market with the aim of provoking attention, and encouraging purchase and consumption while meeting the desires and needs of consumers (Keller, 2009; Achrol & Kotler, 2015). The products include physical objects, services, places, organisations and ideas (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). Defining a tourism product is a complex problem within tourism marketing (Popesku, 2013; Frochot & Batat, 2013). The basis product definition should be the key objective of the marketing concept, meeting the needs of a tourist (Kotler, 2003; Hall, 2014; Law et al., 2014).

The synthesis of numerous definitions of tourism product was given by Bakic (2011), who has indicated the importance of partial and integrated tourism products. In this paper, special attention is given to the integrated destination product, which represents the sum of different partial tourism products (Bakic, 2011). It involves the establishment of the product on the level of a specific tourist destination and is derived from the needs, demands and preferences of its tourists (Romero & Tejada, 2011; Morrison, 2013). It is also often referred to as the complex and total tourism product (Bakic, 2011; Song, 2012).

Some researchers who analyse destination and its product, are focused on the image of the tourist destination (Pike, 2002; Hankinson, 2004; Yang, He, & Gu, 2012). Also, the tourist destination brand is analysed, which involves the analysis of the brand image from various aspects, connecting its measurement with different groups of tourists (Hankinson, 2005; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgli, 2007), their perceptions

and reviews (Pike, 2014), and with the processes of successful development (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002). Some researchers point out the measurement of the tourist destination product/brand identity (Konecnik & Go, 2008; Gómez, Yagüe & Villaseñor, 2014) and the measurement of the brand based on the tourism experience in the destination (Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014). The importance of the tourist experience itself for the tourist destination product is seen in the context of an unforgettable experience that the tourist acquires in a destination (Tung and Ritchie, 2011).

Tourists see the destination as a whole, offering an integrated experience (Buhalis, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000). According to Middleton et al. (2009), the basic elements of the integrated destination product are: attractiveness and environment of destination; destination facilities and services; accessibility of destination; image of destination; and price to the consumer. According to the UNWTO (2007, pp. 1–2), the elements of a tourist destination are classified as: attractions, services and facilities, accessibility, image, price and human resources. Popesku (2013) states that the image and the way in which a destination is perceived by tourists are important factors that can influence the choice of the tourist destination, but they can't be a part of the tourism product as separate elements. Pike (2008, p. xiii) stresses that destinations are multi-dimensional and that the destination product is an amalgam of a varied and often pre-selected range of attractions, activities, people, landscapes, accommodations, amenities and climate. Morrison (2013) introduces a destination mix: designed destination tourism products, services, attractions, events, transportation, infrastructure, resources, hospitality, etc. He also states that the destination product has four basic components: physical product, attractions, amenities, transport and infrastructure. He also points to the local population (hospitality), package - combined elements and programmes, stressing that the destination mix and destination product are related terms (Morrison, 2012).

The measurement of the basic elements of the destination mix (attractiveness, accessibility, and destination facilities and services) still has not been examined sufficiently in the literature.

In literature, attractiveness is perceived through measurement based on tourist experiences (Hu & Ritchie, 1993), or tourist satisfaction (Swarbrooke & Page, 2002). There are some aspects that focus on the influence of the image on the attractiveness of a destination (Kim & Perdue, 2011). Also, the importance of attractiveness in achieving tourist destination competitiveness is emphasized (Vengesai, 2003; Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009). Attractiveness measurement is based on the indicators on the supply and demand side (Formica & Uysal, 2006). There are also views in the context of defining and measuring the relations between the attractiveness and experience, and loyalty of the tourists (Vigolo, 2014). In the destination competitiveness models, attractiveness is often measured through the natural,

cultural and created resources (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Crouch, 2006).

Accessibility, as a product element, is perceived from the economic aspect, i.e. costs of the travel to a destination, and from the aspect of geographic distance of the outgoing markets (Bakic, 2011). It also refers to the technological improvement in the field of transport (Murphy, 2013) and to the overall transport system of the destination's connections with other areas (Buhalis, 2000). Murphy (2013) stresses that accessibility cannot be related only to perceiving the distance between and the physical connection of a destination to other areas and outgoing markets. We can add that the tourist destination accessibility is also the accessibility of the information about a destination.

Overall, destination accessibility is related also to the importance that accessibility has for the overall competitiveness of a tourist destination. Some accessibility indicators belong to the supporting factors in the destination competitiveness models (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004; Crouch, 2006). These factors are defined in contemporary, most common models of destination competitiveness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Accessibility can be the crucial factor and determinant that influences the assessment of the overall tourist satisfaction (Wang & Zhang, 2013) and represents the important element of the tourist destination development (Więckowski et al., 2014). Special emphasis is given to the importance of physical accessibility for persons with disabilities, regarding accessible tourism development in a destination (Chen, 2013). It is emphasized that the measurement of the accessibility importance can be a crucial contribution to the attractiveness of the destination itself, in specific forms of tourism such as cyclotourism (Lee & Huang, 2014).

Middleton and Clarke (2012) state that destination facilities and services include: accommodation, restaurants, bars and cafes, transport at the destination, sports activities, other facilities, retail outlets and other services. Bakic (2011) defines destination facilities and services as: tourist accommodation and catering, recreation, entertainment, amusement, etc.

The analysis of the integrated product elements in literature as well as the approaches to defining the indicators in the destination competitiveness models, have led to the selection of the basic indicators for the research in this paper. The chosen elements are shown in Table 1. The elements selected include the competitiveness indicators of the tourist destination product. The competitiveness of that product depends also on the performance of the tourism industry itself, which is reflected, among selected elements, in the destination facilities and services, or more precisely in the indicators that are related to the quality of food, accommodation and diversity of programmes, activities and entertainment.

Table 1. Selected indicators for the research

Product elements	Attractiveness	Accessibility	Destination facilities and services
Indicators	Uniqueness of resources (natural, cultural, historical, etc.)	Access to information about destination	Interaction and communication with local population
	Protected and clean environment	Transport to and from destination	Food quality in tourist destination
	Favourable weather and climate conditions in destination	Affordable cost of services (transport, accommodation, activities/programmes, etc.)	Accommodation quality Diversity of activities, entertainment and programmes

METHOD

The competitiveness of a tourist destination is usually, basically, observed through the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays. According to the data of Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia – Department Uzice, by all the indicators given in Table 2, Bajina Basta is the tourist destination with higher tourist arrivals and, therefore, more overnight stays on an annual level compared to the destination of Prijepolje (Table 3). A decrease in the number of tourists since 2011 is notable in both destinations. In Bajina Basta, the number of foreign tourists slightly grows in 2012. Having these data in mind, we can conclude that Bajina Basta can be considered as the more successful destination. Based on this, it is necessary to define the elements of the tourism product which determine the destination as more or less successful.

Table 2. Tourist arrivals and overnights – Bajina Basta

Year	Bajina Basta					
	Tourist arrivals			Tourist overnights		
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign
2011	48,673	46,778	1,895	178,036	170,600	7,436
2012	46,830	44,422	2,408	174,148	164,905	9,243
2013	38,689	36,321	2,368	159,358	150,841	8,517
2014	33,447	32,001	1,446	142,178	137,283	4,895

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia - Department Uzice

Table 3. Tourist arrivals and overnights – Prijepolje

Year	Prijepolje					
	Tourist arrivals			Tourist overnights		
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign
2011	3,634	2,871	763	9,827	8,312	1,515
2012	2,379	1,789	590	3,794	3,142	652
2013	2,123	1,669	454	3,791	3,223	568
2014	588	450	138	657	515	142

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia - Department Uzice

Although the number of arrivals and overnight stays is an important indicator of the destination competitiveness, in line with the objective of this paper, it is necessary to provide and compare the assessments of the destination product elements of the two destinations. In this way, it would be possible to establish a basis for the integrated tourism product development.

For collecting primary data the questionnaire method was used (Zikmund et al., 2010). For data analysis, the t-test statistic was used.

The survey was carried out in two phases. The first phase covered a survey amongst the visitors of Belgrade Tourism Fair 2014, where the respondents rated the destination Bajina Basta. The survey lasted from 26th February until 1st March 2014. Based on the method of random sampling, a total of 446 responses were collected.

The second phase covered a survey for the tourist destination of Prijepolje, as a part of the 'Programme of Tourism Development in Prijepolje Municipality 2015–2020' research. The survey was conducted among the visitors of the Tourism Fair in Novi Sad and Nis. The responses were also collected in the area of Sarajevo and city of Pljevlja. The total number of responses collected was 280 (Nis: 100; Novi Sad: 58; Sarajevo: 59; Pljevlja: 64). The survey was conducted from 3rd April until 20th April 2014.

The answers were divided into: the respondents who had already visited and those who had not visited the destination. Furthermore, this implied that those who had visited the destination made the assessment of the key tourist destination product elements based on their experiences during travelling and staying in the destination. The respondents assessed the set of indicators based on the Likert scale, with ratings 1 ('extremely uncompetitive') to 5 ('extremely competitive').

A total of 73.99% of the respondents in the sample for Bajina Basta, and 33.21% for Prijepolje, have already visited destination. Those respondents gave the assessment of the indicators.

Out of the total of 446 respondents that took part in the questionnaire for the destination of Bajina Basta, 41.72% were female and 58.28% were male. The majority of the respondents were in the age group 21–30 (46%),

22% were 31–50, 12% were 51–60 and 20% belonged to the other age groups (under 21 and over 61).

Out of the total respondents covered by the sample for the destination of Prijepolje (280 respondents), 49.5% were male and 50.5% were female. The majority of the respondents (37.7%) belonged to the age group 21–30, 34.9% were between 31–50 years of age, while 28.4% were in other age groups, with the most respondents under 20 (9.9%).

It was found that 15 respondents in the sample for Bajina Basta and 26 respondents for Prijepolje did not rate all the product indicators so their responses were excluded from further statistical analysis. The total assessment of the indicators for Bajina Basta is 315 and for Prijepolje it is 67.

During the analysis, a huge difference was noted between the numbers of the respondents who assessed the indicators for Bajina Basta and for Prijepolje (total difference was 248 respondents). For the purpose of a valid statistical data processing, by the method of random sampling, the number of the responses from the sample of Bajina Basta was reduced to 63. Every fifth response was randomly taken out from the total number, in order to reduce its influence on the standard deviation and comparison of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the collected primary data was performed at first on a lower level, defined indicators (that constitute groups of elements) (Table 1), and afterwards, on the level of elements. At the end, the integrated product was analysed, which included the testing of the hypothesis.

The means gained from the analysis of the integrated destination product of Bajina Basta and Prijepolje are displayed in Fig. 1. By the majority of the specific indicators, Bajina Basta is better rated (the exceptions are two indicators in destination facilities and services). In the majority of reviews, the differences between means range from 0.17 to 0.33.

When attractiveness is in focus, the largest difference between the means for the specific indicators is noted as favourable weather and climate conditions and is 0.33, which is slightly higher than the difference with the other two indicators (0.19; 0.24).

On the other hand, the most significant difference in the means is noted in the indicator access to information about the destination, in the scope of the element of accessibility, which is 0.75. With the other two indicators (transport to and from destination and affordable cost of services) there are slight differences in the means (0.14; 0.17), and this contributed to the mitigation of the influence of the first indicator to the overall rating within this element.

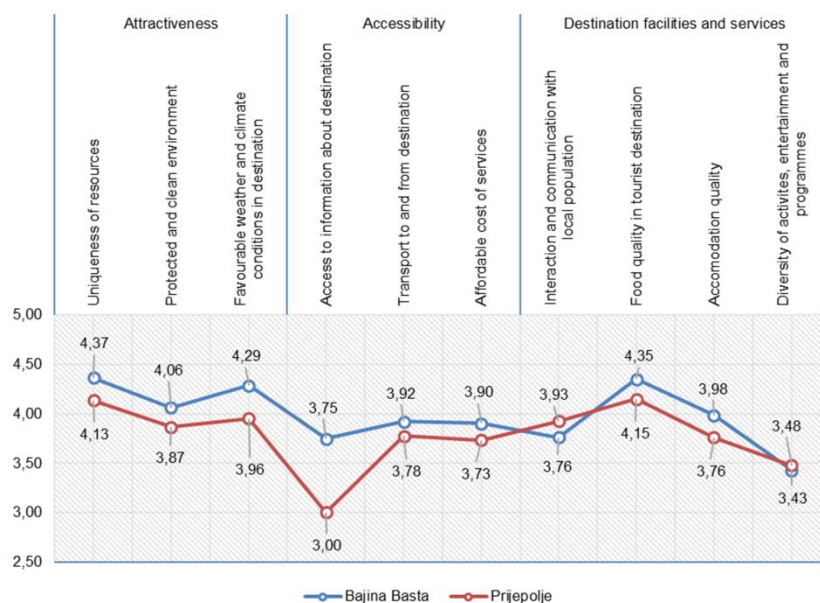


Figure 1. Means of indicators

Within the group of destination facilities and services, Prijepolje achieved better means with two out of four indicators covered by this element. The difference in the mean in the case of the interaction and communication with the local population is 0.16, and with the diversity of activities, entertainment and programmes, it is minimal compared to all other indicators (0.05). With the other two indicators (food quality and accommodation quality) the differences are ranged as average (0.20; 0.22) in favour of Bajina Basta.

When it comes to the dispersion of ratings (Table 4), the respondents expressed a relative unity in the responses for both destinations (average standard deviation of all elements approximately $SD=1.00$). Deviations are noted in the interaction and communication with the local population ($SD=1.21$) and protected and clean environment ($SD=1.08$; $SD=1.07$).

An analysis at the level of product elements (attractiveness, accessibility and destination facilities and services) is carried out in order to examine the importance of the difference in the perception of the visitor's experience in Bajina Basta and Prijepolje. The t-test statistic of independent samples is used.

Each respondent rated all 10 indicators. For attractiveness and accessibility, in line with the number of the respondents and number of the reviewed indicators for each of these two elements (three indicators each), the number of observations for Bajina Basta is 189 ($3*63$), and for Prijepolje 201 ($3*67$). For destination facilities and services (four

indicators), the number of observations for Bajina Basta is 252 (4*63), and for Prijepolje 268 (4*67). For the total, integrated product, the number of observations for Bajina Basta is 630 (10*63), and for Prijepolje 670 (10*67).

Table 4. Product elements mean and standard deviation

Elements of integrated tourist destination product	Bajina Basta		Prijepolje	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Attractiveness	4.24	0.99	3.99	0.99
Uniqueness of resources	4.37	0.90	4.13	0.95
Protected and clean environment	4.06	1.08	3.87	1.07
Favourable weather and climate conditions in destination	4.29	0.97	3.96	0.93
Accessibility	3.86	0.97	3.50	0.96
Access to information about destination	3.75	1.09	3.00	0.89
Transport to and from destination	3.92	0.99	3.78	0.97
Affordable cost of services	3.90	0.82	3.73	0.83
Destination facilities and services	3.88	1.11	3.83	1.03
Interaction and communication with local Population	3.76	1.21	3.93	1.21
Food quality in tourist destination	4.35	1.03	4.15	0.89
Accommodation quality	3.98	0.96	3.76	0.91
Diversity of activities, entertainment and Programmes	3.43	1.03	3.48	0.97
Overall rating	3.98	1.05	3.78	1.01

The F-test for each tourist destination's product element and for the integrated product itself was conducted in order to test the equality of variances. The F-test showed an insignificant difference between the variances of all variables so the t-test of independent samples with equal variances was used. The t-test results are displayed in Table 5.

That quantified difference (0.20) between the means of the variables of the integrated tourism product in both tourist destinations is statistically significant ($t=3.56$, $df=1298$, $p=0.000$). The respondents rated the integrated product of Bajina Basta ($M=3.98$; $SD=1.05$) as better positioned compared to the integrated product of Prijepolje ($M=3.78$; $SD=1.01$).

When it comes to the elements of the integrated product, the results displayed in Table 4 and Table 5, show the significance of the difference (0.25) between the variables of attractiveness for both destinations ($t=2.526$, $df=388$, $p=0.012$). The respondents reviewed the attractiveness of Bajina Basta ($M=4.4$; $SD=0.99$) with much higher ranks compared to Prijepolje ($M=3.99$; $SD=0.99$).

Regarding the variable of accessibility for both destinations, the results show that there is a statistically relevant difference (0.36) between these two variables ($t=3.627$, $df=388$, $p=0.000$). The respondents rated the accessibility of Bajina Basta ($M=3.86$; $SD=0.87$) better compared to the accessibility of Prijepolje ($M=3.50$; $SD=0.96$).

Table 5. The t-Test results

Indicator/Destination	Mean	Variance	df	t Stat	p
Integrated product			1298	3.562	0.0004
Bajina Basta	3.981	1.093			
Prijepolje	3.778	1.025			
Attractiveness			388	2.526	0.0119
Bajina Basta	4.238	0.980			
Prijepolje	3.985	0.975			
Accessibility			388	3.627	0.0003
Bajina Basta	3.857	0.942			
Prijepolje	3.502	0.921			
Destination facilities and services			518	0.561	0.5748
Bajina Basta	3.881	1.229			
Prijepolje	3.828	1.057			

A somewhat different conclusion is gained from the analyses of the destination facilities and services. The T-test show that there is not a statistically significant difference between these two variables (difference =0.05, t=0.561, df=518, p=0.575). The respondents rated equally the destination facilities and services for Bajina Basta (M=3.88; SD=1.11) and Prijepolje (M=3.83; SD=1.03).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to propose an approach for destination competitiveness measurement in the case of two destinations in Western Serbia. The selected approach confirmed that the perception of the integrated destination product can be used as a reliable indicator of destination competitiveness. The integrated destination product of the destination with a higher number of tourist arrivals, overnight stays and generally a better market position was better rated by destination visitors.

This paper identifies the most important elements of a destination product: attractiveness, accessibility, and destination facilities and services. The use of these elements depends largely on the appropriate selection of the indicators whose assessment shows the advantages and/or disadvantages of destinations.

Although attractiveness and accessibility have proved to be the most important elements for the competitiveness of the chosen destinations, the same cannot be stated for destination facilities and services. The analysis showed that the accommodation quality and diversity of activities, entertainment and programmes, does not significantly influence destination competitiveness.

The means of the indicators show that the greatest deviations between these destinations are noted in the elements of attractiveness and

accessibility, while there is no significant difference in ratings for destination facilities and services. Regarding the destination facilities and services, the destination with generally worse market position recorded was better graded when it comes to interaction and communication with the local population, and diversity of activities, entertainment and programmes.

This research established one of the bases for destination competitiveness measurement, which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a tourist destination. This approach can further provide guidelines for destination development based on the improvement of a tourist destination product and its elements. This research was conducted with the support of the Sports and Tourism Centre of Bajina Basta, Tourism Organisation of Prijepolje, Regional Tourism Organisation of Western Serbia, and Regional Development Agency Zlatibor.

For future research, a larger number of indicators should be established for more precise measurements. This model could also be used for the competitiveness measurement of countries as tourist destinations, and it could be directed to the comparison of Serbia with its defined competitive set.

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ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈА ТУРИСТА КАО КЉУЧНИ ПОКАЗАТЕЉ КОНКУРЕНТНОСТИ ТУРИСТИЧКЕ ДЕСТИНАЦИЈЕ

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Резиме

Циљ овог рада био је да се успоставе основе за испитивање односа између обједињеног производа туристичке дестинације и конкурентности туристичке дестинације. У овом раду су на основу широког прегледа литературе дефинисани најважнији елементи обједињеног производа туристичке дестинације: атрактивност, приступачност и услови за боравак. На основу тога, адекватни показатељи су дефинисани и одабрани за мерење односа између интегрисаног туристичког производа и конкурентности туристичке дестинације. Предложени приступ показао се применљивим на примерима дестинација Бајина Башта и Пријепоље, које су одабране за анализу као дестинације са сличним географским карактеристикама, на основу припадности заједничкој Туристичкој регији Западна Србија, усмерености ка истим посетиоцима овог региона са сличним, међусобно конкурентним туристичким производима. Секундарни подаци су потврдили да Бајина

Башта има више туриста (домаћих и страних) и остварених туристичких ноћења у односу на Пријепоље. Према томе, Бајина Башта се може сматрати успешнијом и конкурентнијом туристичком дестинацијом. Наведена разлика у успешности између ових дестинација огледа се у знатно различитом броју долазака и ноћења туриста (домаћих и страних) посматраним у периоду између 2012. и 2014. године. Резултати добијени истраживањем такође потврђују значајну статистичку разлику у оцени обједињеног производа ове две дестинације. Овај закључак је изведен на основу оцене туриста који су посетили дестинацију. Резултати истраживања су потврдили да је интегрисани производ Бајине Баште, као дестинације са већим бројем туриста и остварених ноћења, боље оцењен од стране посетилаца туристичке дестинације. Доказано је да је уопштено боља позиција на туристичком тржишту у позитивној корелацији са оценама елемената производа добијеним од стране посетилаца дестинације. Наведени резултати су потврдили почетну хипотезу: опажање обједињеног производа туристичке дестинације може се користити као индикатор конкурентности туристичке дестинације. Сходно томе, туристички доживљај се може сматрати фундаменталним у контексту значаја за успех туристичке дестинације. У складу са добијеним резултатима, однос између обједињеног производа туристичке дестинације и конкурентности дестинације, на основу овог приступа, може се користити за почетно мерење конкурентности између дестинација. На основу оваквог приступа, могуће је установити слабости и/или јаке стране конкурентске позиције дестинације, што даље може послужити као основа за развој туристичке дестинације, односно унапређење обједињеног туристичког производа и његових елемената. Сходно томе, коришћени модел у овом раду може бити употребљен и у будућим истраживањима за мерење конкурентности између земаља као туристичких дестинација.