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Article

The qualitiy of the tourist destinations a key factor for increasing their attractiveness

UTMS Journal of Economics

Provided in Cooperation with:
University of Tourism and Management, Skopje

Suggested Citation: Blazeska, Daliborka; Milenkovski, Ace; Gramatnikovski, Sashko (2015) : The qualitiy of the tourist destinations a key factor for increasing their attractiveness, UTMS Journal of Economics, ISSN 1857-6982, University of Tourism and Management, Skopje, Vol. 6, Iss. 2, pp. 341-353

This Version is available at:
https://hdl.handle.net/10419/146368

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Daliborka Blazeska, Ace Milenkovski, and Sashko Gramatnikovski. 2015. The Quality of the Tourist Destinatination a Key Factor for Increasing their Attractiveness. *UTMS Journal of Economics* 6 (2): 341–353.

Preliminary communication
(accepted August 14, 2015)

THE QUALITY OF THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS A KEY FACTOR FOR INCREASING THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS

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Abstract
Taking into consideration that the tourism is extremely important for any country including Republic of Macedonia, it is necessary to pay attention to the quality of the tourist destinations and increasing of their attractiveness. So winners in the field of tourism will be those countries that have attractive tourist destination that will attract a lot of visitors. In this paper is defined the relationship between the factors of attractiveness of the destination and the achieving of competitiveness. In order to become competitive in the global market, the tourist destination has to be innovative and to continually search for new competitive advantages. Those kind of competitive advantages enable stable and long-term sustainable development of the tourist destination.

In this paper special emphasis is put to the monitoring of the quality of the tourist destination with constant inquiries of the tourists (domestic and foreign) regarding the most important segments of the quality of the tourist product which they are using, in order to perceive the satisfaction or the eventual dissatisfaction in order to be taken concrete strategies for the following period. The obtained results clearly confirm the dissatisfaction with the road infrastructure and signalization, the price of the services and the conditions for the stay, as well as the additional attractions that were expected to get.

Keywords: quality, tourist product, tourist destinations, attractiveness, satisfaction of the consumers.

Jel Classification: Q01; M30

INTRODUCTION

The attractiveness as a factor that attracts tourists to certain location could be presented as a mix of many elements. The attractiveness of the destination or the attractive factors in the destination is the determining force that affects the concrete choice by the tourists (Formica and Uysal 2006). If the tourist hesitates between several destinations, and in case the conditions of stay, the price and the accessibility are relatively same, the

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attraction factors can be those who will influence to making the final decision and the choice of certain destination. The attraction factors are the motivating force and they are the leading reason for the tourists to decide to go on a trip. In fact the attractive factor as an element of the tourist destination or the attraction can be nature locations within the destination (product of nature) or objects and constructions built by human hand, but also different "live" events such as carnivals (Senecic and Grgona 2006). In times of expansion of the tourist and especially the hotel industry in the last two decades the participants of the international tourist market as a place for offer-demand, perceive communication with the modern terminology which in fact reflects the changes in the market relations. Namely from marketing perspective is perceived the change in promotion of the national tourist product with a priority to promote the image of the destinations in one country on account of promotion of the national offer of the country. In that sense it is necessary to be emphasized the complexity of the structure of factors that make the image of one tourist destination; and that is a guarantee for the satisfaction of the guest due to integrated realization of the destination quality (Kim, Vogt, and Knutson 2015). The tourist in the chosen destination expects to have everything and everything to be functional.

1. METHODOLOGY

The basic presumption of this paper is to be found appropriate ways to achieve quality in one tourist destination and at the same time to be increased the attractiveness of that tourist destination. In fact the final goal is the desire to achieve leading position of the destination in certain type of the tourism or to achieve stable position on the tourist market. The way on which the goals are achieved is called strategy and it is nothing else but means through which is achieved the wanted condition. In order to be achieved the increasing of the attractiveness of the tourist destinations; important factor for success is the quality of each tourist destination, which depends on the satisfaction of the consumers and the approach that destination (Oom do Valle, Correia, and Rebelo 2008).

Each company has a reputation and each tourist destination wants to create an image that will make it recognizable in the world tourist market (Bonn, Joseph, and Dai 2005). For one tourist destination everyone has certain opinion independently whether he/she has visited that tourist destination or not. The application of appropriate strategy enables to the tourist destination the following (Tussyadiah, Kono, and Morisugi 2006):

- to set apart from the competition
- to call the attention of the target group with own message
- to create their own credibility
- to influence to the emotions of the user
- to gain the trust of the user.

So the main goal is to be achieved adequate quality of the tourist destination that will enable increasing of its attractiveness or specifically with that will be conquered the targeted groups and in the choice of the tourist destination they will see logical choice.

First of all, the potential tourist through communication with the environment acquires certain knowledge about the destination. Then additionally searches for information and establishes the beliefs for satisfaction of the needs and expectations (Oppermann 2000). The main strength of the destination is achieved through the quality which will attract the guests and will fulfill their expectations. In order to be achieved

this target the tourist destinations should first develop and then to make themselves available for the target groups. All this will be achieved by applying appropriate strategic approach. No place, monument or event is tourist attraction by itself. It becomes attraction after series of tourist activities and when the tourism will elevate them to the level of attraction but primarily there should be quality that will satisfy the tourists. So the quality of certain destination exists if we manage to bring tourists to that destination and to provide them during the stay to learn about the advantages and qualities of the destination which is expected before the arrival and during the stay. Finally the tourists should be satisfied.

So in terms of globalization and expressed competition it is necessary each tourist destination to increase the attractiveness and that will be achieved primarily if the destination has quality that will provide satisfaction to the tourists that are visiting.

According to this the goals of this research are:

- understanding the importance of the attractiveness of the tourist destination as one of the factors for achieving competitive advantage
- to determine of the factors that influence the attractiveness of one tourist destination
- to emphasize the role of the quality as one of the key factors for achieving strategic position of the tourist destinations
- defining of the important components of the tourist destinations
- recognition of the diversity of services on the tourist market
- proving the importance of the tourism for one country, the attractiveness of the tourist destinations and strategic options for performance on that tourist market-

What is in common from all aspects is the fact we live in time of globalization where the competition comes to the fore. Precisely in these conditions in order to succeed on this market we must differentiate from the others. The differentiation on the tourist market can be achieved through the tourist destinations that will become attractive to larger number of tourists. However this is not so simple and requires great effort, time and financial means.

First should be approached to consider the situation regarding the attractiveness of the tourist destinations in Republic of Macedonia and then to find ways to increase the quality of these tourist destinations in order to enable them to become more attractive in the upcoming period.

2. OF THE TOURIST PRODUCT

The product is one of the elements without which it is impossible and pointless to establish relation between the offer and the demand (Blythe 2005). In fact the product is a foundation without which it is impossible for any market to operate, not even the tourist market. Furthermore the product is a final result of certain activity by which is valuated the utility of its existence and presence in the market (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 2010). On the commodity market is given great importance to the product because of its features but in theory is hardly discussed for determining the concept of quality. Primarily in order to be successful each product on the market should have quality above all. On the commodity market the product can be seen, touched, tasted, smelled etc. (Kotler 2003). So it's a matter of materialized market good, physically present and visible for each consumer so it was considered that theoretical discussions and explanations of the term product are unnecessarily.

Unlike the market on which are present touchable products, in the tourism, the tourist market the possibilities are different. On this tourist market are provided services but they are quite specific because we don't know their quality before we start to use them. We cannot see them, touch them and evaluate them until we start to use them. First we pay for them and then we use them.

The marketing set another interesting question regarding the tourist market (Adcock, Halborg, and Ross 2001). One of the most important certainly is the term total product which the marketing introduced in the economic theory. The conception of total product appears due to the fact that the needs of the modern human in some area are difficult to fulfill with only one product or one service, no matter how stylish, perfect and comprehensive for satisfaction of the consumers' needs. But no matter how the physical product is attractive and perfect it becomes unusable without additional components, without services.

On the modern market together with the tourist product are provided many other services without which the product cannot be imagined, and those are: transport service, hotel service (accommodation and food, carrying baggage etc). Besides that the object of the tourist exchange is meal at the restaurant (outside the accommodation object), rental of sun loungers and sun umbrella for beach, rental of skis, party of mini golf or tennis, and also souvenirs, postcards, motor boats, cars, visit of museums, attending exhibitions or attending concerts. In the exchange facilities should be mentioned the blue lake, sandy beach, clean environment, benches and parks, the smile of the customs officers to wish you welcome, the smile of the hoteliers or the smile of the person working in the travel agency. In subject of exchange should be mentioned the activity of the tourist destination, the image of the tourist market, the desired atmosphere for vacation and recreation (Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil 2007). All this could be transferred to each facility of the tourist offer. The tourist product in order to be accepted by the tourists need to have quality but to say that it is required the product to be wanted by the tourists and to satisfy their expectations.

On the basis of the attractiveness of some primary offer for certain destination the tourists are motivated for visiting that tourist destination (Al-Ababneh 2013). Basically the tourists are interested in good atmosphere, favorable climate, civilized place etc., and the actual services and products that the tourists can use in that destination have secondary importance for the arrival of the tourists. Such services only ensure the stay of the tourists but they don't bring them in the tourist place. But that doesn't mean that the tourists are not interested in tourist destinations that offer quality services in the category of secondary services (regarding the needs of the tourists). Sometimes the availability of many such conditions can be determining factor or additional motivation for the tourists to visit precisely that destination. The fact that on that destination can be bought the best souvenirs, that there is beautifully equipped and neat restaurant or the rooms in the hotel are too comfortable won't be the main reason for visiting that tourist destination.

The complete pleasure of the tourists is created with the primary and secondary tourist offers because that is the only guarantee for satisfying the tourist customers and their specific requests, needs and preferences. This creates dependence of individual subjects of the tourist offer. Namely each of them will satisfy its interest in the moment when it will ensure the interest of the other subjects of the offer. We always should take into consideration the fact that the satisfying of the tourist needs can be made with more individual services and products in conditions that suit the tourist destination.

3. SITUATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA REGARDING THE INCREASE OF THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS

Republic of Macedonia has high predispositions to develop the tourism in national framework by strategic concept for creating numerous small but absolutely unique tourist destinations. The unifying elements of this concept should be: building an image for every destination individually by the concept of integrated quality at level of destination, conceptualized and comparable according to the international criteria for evaluation of one tourist destination and the same should be unique in its offer with great admixtures of the local designing of the international core of the offer. The development concept of each destination will be based and will arise from the originality of the available potentials of the same. On the other hand Republic of Macedonia due to the relatively small territory and high diversity of potentials has preconditions to be reflected as one structurally complex destination. The availability with potentials for development of monastery tours, wine tourism, spa tourism i.e. wellness and spa centers, hunting tourism, lake, winter, sport, congress, business, rural and transit tourism accompanied with numerous and attractive manifestations presents the country as whole which is predisposition for its development into unique and competitive destination.

But although Macedonia is really a country that can be attractive tourist destination still there is certain disadvantage that the country is still not attractive. Proof of that are the data for the number of foreign tourists who visit Republic of Macedonia which is relatively small compared to other famous and attractive destinations.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office the number of tourists in 2014 was 735 650, from which 310 336 were domestic and 425 314 were foreign tourists. In 2013 the number of tourists was 710 794, from which 302 114 were domestic and 399 680 were foreign tourists. These data are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Number of domestic and foreign tourists in 2014 year

Number of tourists	2013	2014
Domestic	302 114	310 336
Foreign	399 680	425 314
Total	701 794	735 650

Source: State Statistical Office, Republic of Macedonia

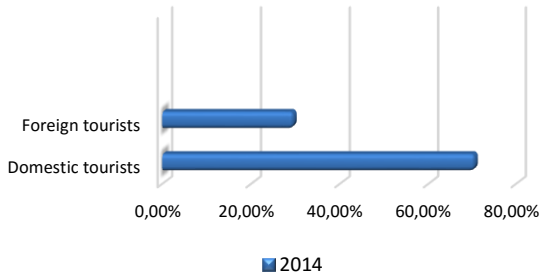

Figure 1. Percentage chart of the tourists for July and August in 2014

Source: State Statistical Office, Republic of Macedonia

In this chart are shown the statistic data for the tourists for July and August because the number of tourists is most expressed in the summer period due to the choice of the summer tourist destinations which are the attractive tourist destination.

The total number of domestic and foreign tourists in 2014 compared to previous years according to the statistic data show that the number of tourists is increasing. The total number of foreign tourists is increased for 6.4%, total number of domestic tourists is increased for 2.7% compared to the previous year, or total number of tourists this year compared to the previous year the number of tourists is increased for 4.8%. However should be paid much more attention to the increase of the attractiveness of the tourist destinations in Macedonia, by increasing their quality will increase the number of domestic tourists and especially the number of foreign tourists taking into consideration that Macedonia is a small country. For Republic of Macedonia there is no enough information and this country is actually as a blank sheet of paper. Also because of the lack of information is considered that Macedonia is at the end of the world considering the bad traffic connections.

4. RESEARCH

The best way for monitoring the quality of the tourist destination is constant investigating of the tourists (domestic and foreign) opinion regarding the most important segments of the quality of the tourist product they are using, in order to see the satisfaction or the eventual dissatisfaction so that can be taken concrete strategies for the upcoming period. This will contribute to improvement of the destination quality and creation of new ideas to ensure permanent quality of the tourist destination. The study was conducted to 400 respondents (domestic and foreign students) in the cities Ohrid and Skopje. This questionnaire consists of 3 parts. In the first part is required data how the respondents get info about the destination they visited. The second part refers to the satisfaction of the consumers of the attributes of the tourist demand during the stay in certain tourist destination. The third part of the questionnaire refers to the research whether the tourist destinations in Republic of Macedonia offer enough information, products and services to the tourist which increases the satisfaction of the tourists. During conducting the questionnaire was paid attention to the communication preceding the arrival, the satisfaction of the tourists from the stay and the accessibility to our country and tourist destinations.

From the conducted questionnaire below are shown only part of the questions that are crucial to this research.

One of the key questions was whether the respondents like Republic of Macedonia? According to the answers were received the following data:

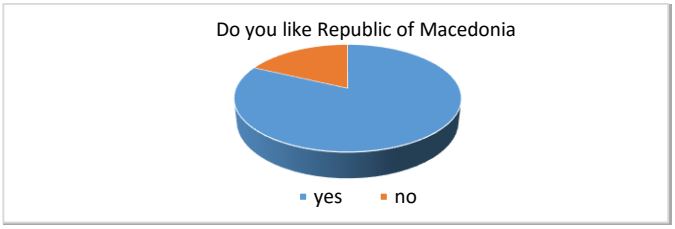

Figure 2. Percentage chart of the likeability of Republic of Macedonia

Based on the data 82% of the total numbers of respondents answered affirmatively to this question which means that large number of respondents like Republic of Macedonia and 18% of them were not satisfied with the country. This data indicate that however it is large the number of satisfied tourists that like Macedonia.

To the question where did you get information about what Republic of Macedonia offers for the tourists? The following data was obtained:

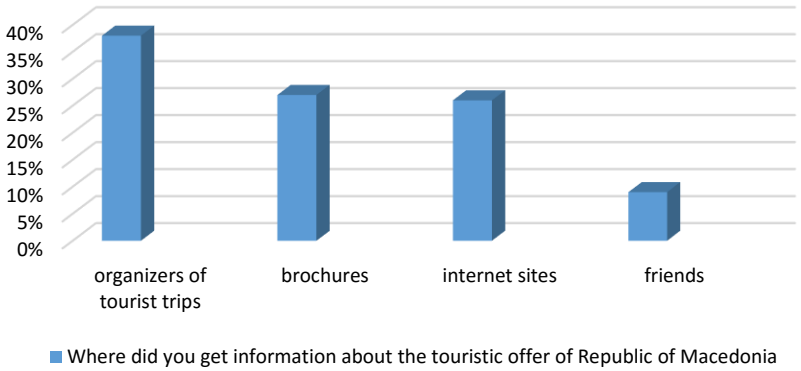

Figure 3. Percentage chart for the ways of information of the tourists about Republic of Macedonia

According to the obtained results 38% of the respondents answered that they got the information from the organizers of tourist trips, 27% got the information for the tourist offer from brochures, 26% got the information from the internet sites and 9% got the information from friends. According to the received data we can conclude that has to be paid more attention to the promotional activities through internet sites which should be more creative in order to attract the tourists and on the other hand they should be rich with information and real images and of course two-way communication. Also should be paid more attention to the satisfaction of the guests who will transfer with enthusiasm their positive experience to their friends, which will contribute to increasing the information of the potential tourists.

To the question what are the motives that made you visit Republic of Macedonia as a tourist destination were obtained the following data:

Table 2. Motives for visiting Republic of Macedonia

Motive for coming	Expressed as average from 1-5
Sun, climate	4.20
Good food	4.09
Beauty of nature	4.08
Visiting new places	4.01
Walking and sightseeing	3.65
Good service in trade	3.55
Entertainment, going out	3.47
Good traffic connections	2.37
Selection of short trips	2.28

The respondents could respond to the questions with grades on a scale from 1 to 5. From the processing of the data is visible that the motives which attract the tourists to visit the tourist destinations in Republic of Macedonia are the following:

The main motive for the tourists in the tourist destination is the climate, beauty of nature, visiting new places and good food. The passive resting, doing sports and interesting things are not important motive when choosing one destination. The entertainment and the night life are in the middle of the table and are not very important motive for the tourists. From the data can be noticed the dissatisfaction with the traffic connections and the road structure which indicates that it should be worked on that.

To the question what type of accommodation they frequently use, were obtained the following data: The majority of the respondents 45% choose private apartments, 30% are accommodated in hotel, 20% in camps and 5% other.

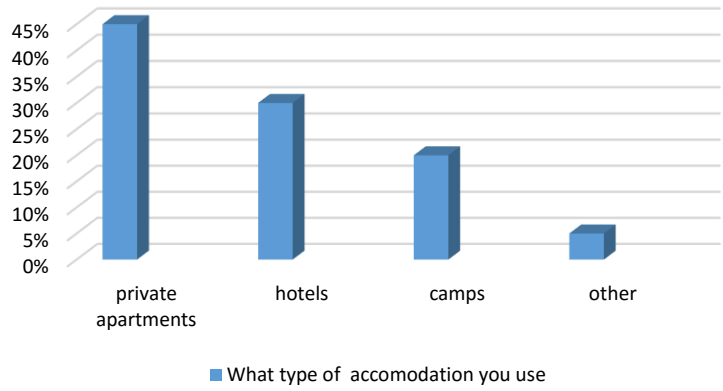

Figure 4. Percentage chart of the types of accommodation in Republic of Macedonia used by the tourists

To the question if they are satisfied with the comfort of the hotels, the following results were obtained:

Figure 5. Percentage chart of the tourists satisfaction of the comfort in the hotels in Republic of Macedonia

According to the obtained data 36% of the respondents were satisfied by the comfort in the hotels, and 64% were not satisfied. This means that needs to be worked on improvement of the additional services that need to be provided in the hotels.

To the question are you satisfied with the food in the hotels were obtained the following data:

Figure 5. Percentage chart of the tourists satisfaction of the comfort in the hotels in Republic of Macedonia

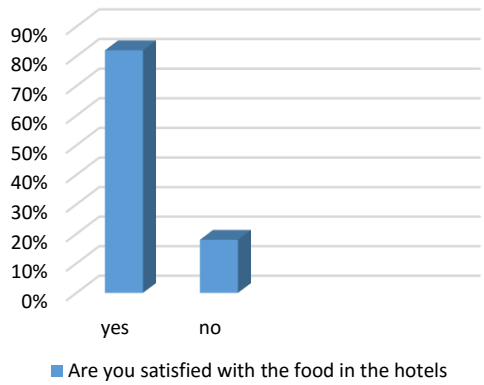

Figure 6. Percentage chart for the tourists satisfaction with the food in the hotels in Republic of Macedonia

From the chart can be noticed that 82% of the respondents are satisfied with the food and only 18% are not satisfied. According to the obtained data can be concluded that the food which is basically traditional increases the satisfaction of the tourists. This was evident also in the previous table where the good food participated with great percentage in the satisfaction of the tourists, besides the analyzing of the other motives for visiting Macedonia.

To the question if there is something that makes you dissatisfied from the visit of Republic of Macedonia were obtained the following data:

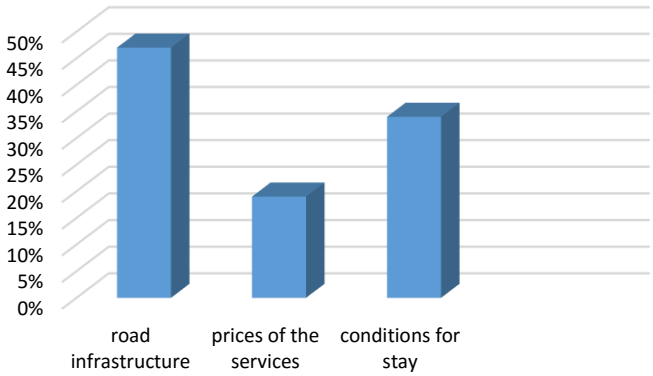

Figure 7. Percentage chart of the reasons for dissatisfaction of the tourists during their visit of Republic of Macedonia

The greatest dissatisfaction refers to the road infrastructure 47% of the respondents are dissatisfied with our road infrastructure, 19% are dissatisfied with the prices of the services and 34% are dissatisfied with the conditions for stay (this refers to additional attractions that should be offered).

To the question for the satisfaction with the attributes of the tourist offer the results from the respondents can be presented in the following table:

Table 3. Factors with which are satisfied the tourists during the visit of Republic of Macedonia

Description	Satisfaction of the tourists with individual factors expressed with grades from 1-5
Climate and weather conditions	4.13
Beauty of the nature and the environment	4.02
Hospitality of the population	4.22
Kindness of the tourism employees	4.35
Safety and security	3.95
Quality food in the restaurants	4.12
Rich gastronomical offer	3.92
Plenty of cultural manifestations	3.68
Cultural treasure	3.99
Offer of food and beverages in the trade	3.78

From the table can be noticed that the tourists express great satisfaction from the climate and weather conditions during their stay in the tourist destination. Also of great importance is the satisfaction from the beauty of the nature and the environment. These obtained data give us important information and also a right to think about good market positioning of the tourist offer. As a result of the use of resources such as the beauty and the environment can be established competitiveness of the tourist destination which can be long-termed. The tourists also expressed their satisfaction with the population and the employees in the tourist activities. After the climate and the weather conditions high grade for the level of satisfaction of the tourists is the kindness of the employees in the tourist activities. The other grades in terms of organization of the tourist destination significantly drop behind which means that the road infrastructure, the signalization, the

accessibility and the connection should be additionally promoted in order to be improved the tourist offer.

5. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

From the answers given and processed can be concluded that Republic of Macedonia as destination has characteristics and values that can be used for increasing the attractiveness and with that for creating one distinctive brand image. The satisfied respondents are deliberately set aside in order to point to the elements for quality when the research is done and the elements that can be improved and additionally developed. The data show that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with the cultural values, but also the tourists give high grades for the nature and the safety in our country.

On the basis of the research that was conducted the respondents i.e. the tourists have shown high level of satisfaction with the offer but still there are things that should be improved. The respondents consider that the greatest assets of the tourist destination are the beauty of the nature, the climate, the hospitality of the population and the employees in the tourist sector. Very highly evaluated is also the quality of the food. The obtained results can be used for further improvement and increasing of the quality of the tourist product.

In this research the respondents had the possibility to evaluate the services for accommodation such as the comfort in the hotels and the quality of the food. Most respondents said that they are not satisfied with the comfort in the hotels but are satisfied with the food quality. But the biggest dissatisfaction referred to the road infrastructure and signalization, the price of the services and the conditions for stay, as well as the additional attractions that were expected to get.

CONCLUSION

The competitive force of the destination is the attraction complexes that have two functions – to attract the guests and to fulfill their expectations. The availability of the tourist destination is currently negatively evaluated which means that we should pay attention to the road infrastructure.

We should know that the communication of the tourists with the tourist destination begins before the tourists visit the destination. This communication is created in different ways: through the organizer of the trip, the mediator, the brochures and internet sites and other promotional activities. Most important is that the information available for the tourists should be authentic and properly organized. If that's not accomplished the tourist will complain because its experience won't match the information he has received. The visual identity of the destination is important because of the quality of the tourist experience. The environment quality is important not only for the tourists but also for the local population. This means that should be strictly paid attention for building and respecting of strategic approach through urbanization of the space in each local place especially the tourist destinations and the arrangement of the other localities. If the destination wants to offer its tourist product on the foreign market must be aware of the needs of the tourists with disabilities and limited movements. These include the older people and families with children. The interpersonal contacts with the tourist destination

are present with the arrival of the tourists. The tourism often affects to the peoples everyday life.

The tourists will be satisfied if they receive quality information regarding their demands. So in Republic of Macedonia should be invested great financial assets in the hotel industry in order to attract larger number of tourists. In this context should be organized the public services, especially the public safety, traffic control and jams, functional health protection including services of emergency care, public services as sanitary hygiene and street cleaning. It is necessary to be paid attention to promotion of the tourism inside Republic of Macedonia addressed to the domestic population i.e. the potential domestic tourists. This is important because the domestic tourists are irreplaceable potential for designing and maintaining the successfulness of the action in the activity especially due to the fact that the tourism is very vulnerable activity of external and express influences, the domestic tourists are barometer for the adequacy of the offer. The tourism is activity that employs many people but also expects a lot from the employees as irreplaceable living resources during the process of creation and delivery of the services. That's why is of crucial importance the tourist subjects to lead the politics for continuous learning as a manner for quality covering of the users need for top service. This particularly involves continuous improvement through regular training, specializations and many other forms of education for the employees.

The various potentials for tourism development by the concept of competitive destinations in Republic of Macedonia is of great importance due to the fact that gives the possibility to be covered and satisfied the more numerous and unstoppable new and new demands that characterize the modern tourist. Today's guests prefer active tourism which will primarily cover interesting and new experiences and desire for the well-known hospitality in times backwards. The hospitality is the crown ornament and the competitive advantage for the Macedonian tourism. The Macedonian hospitality is well known from ancient times but it seems that the time of its real value has just arrived exactly in time when the tourism is expanding worldwide and the tourists are hungry for warm welcome which is attached to the professionalism. That is the source of the guest satisfaction and it is a crown of the successful synthesizing for building strong tourist destination. The competitiveness of the tourist destinations can be spatial, qualitative and quantitative. The analysis of the tourist market for the needs of the competitive appearance of the tourist destination must be with exceptional quality. Should be studied the direct but also the indirect competition, the primary and the secondary competition etc.

We should know that the establishment of the quality in the tourism is a key factor for its success. The goal of the used approach in the tourism is the tourists to be satisfied with the stay in the tourist destination which should enable advantage in the competitive market. The concept of the integrated quality management is recently applied in the development of the tourism. The high degree of competition secures quality of the service and the product of the tourist destination as its most important element. Due to that the integrated quality management has key role in improvement of the competitive position of the tourism.

The quality can be equalized with the luxury and cannot be exclusive but must be available for all tourists including those with special needs. The tourist product should be seen as destination and process that leads to a total experience of the tourists. Main participants are the organizations that perform multiply roles: politics creators, destinations management and quality control, commercial mediators, trained suppliers, the guests and the locals.

Given the complexity of the tourist destination, as well as numerous services that represent its basis, it is very important to link the strategy and the politics of the tourist destination development and on that basis to be seen those elements which are important for managing with the quality in the development of the tourist destination. The quality originated in the manufacturing process is now accepted as quality of the entire process of creation which strives to achieve the desired goals. The quality should be part of the working and living and is the base for development of each destination.

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