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Article

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Economic Review: Journal of Economics and Business

Provided in Cooperation with:

Faculty of Economics, University of Tuzla

Suggested Citation: Gržinić, Jasmina (2018) : Removal of externalities in tourism by means of tour operator specialisation and education, Economic Review: Journal of Economics and Business, ISSN 2303-680X, University of Tuzla, Faculty of Economics, Tuzla, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, pp. 75-86, <https://er.ef.untz.ba/index.php/er/article/view/89>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/267873>

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REMOVAL OF EXTERNALITIES IN TOURISM BY MEANS OF TOUR OPERATOR SPECIALISATION AND EDUCATION

Jasmina Gržinić¹

ABSTRACT

In analysis of specialisation in tourism it is important to reflect on several related terms which have become apparent with the emergence of modern times. This concerns competitiveness, positioning in the tourism market, education and innovativeness. Specifically, it is believed that all the listed terms are closely linked to the process of specialisation in tourism and, more accurately, that the said process affects them or, within a specific context, that it becomes determined by them. At the international level, the most important and most active market is the European market; more precisely, the European Union market, that is to say, its emissive and receptive character. For some time, the leading destinations have stressed the importance of specialisation in tourism, especially the green ones. Wishing to retain their market position, tour operators can help destination sustainable development by specialisation. Due to a large stakeholder network in destinations, former "big players" know them well and propose new tourist attractions. By the research, specialisation in tourism is analysed, as well as the levels and roles of specialisation in the removal of externalities. At the same time, the paper represents a contribution to the analysis of internal and external risks, as it points to the importance of their removal on the example of specialisation in Croatian tourism. While the majority of stakeholders in tourism are oriented towards the profit and creation of additional income in tourism, realistic circumstances and possibilities for development of destination tourism can be realised also through benefits of the forms of selective tourism.

Keywords: tourism, externalities, sustainability, green specialisation, education

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a variable category and it is necessary to manage the changes. It is no longer easy to control, it is controlled by someone with managerial knowledge. For example in Asia and Pacific, where there are strong regional initiatives to develop new products, knowledge (*know-how*) about developing complementary attractions and where the level of authenticity and mysticism that the visit is causing is high. Europe as destination develop new products and cultural routes in order to attract intra-regional travel. This explains the need for different knowledge (interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary) for the purpose of tourism. Today's trends in tourism are selective and alternative tourism and its combination that require specialization expertise (e.g. wellness, gastro, creative tourism, new experience or all of these combination in one).

The basic characteristic of modern tourism is the dynamism of the tourism market and the desire to depart from high seasonality.

As a destination which is recognised at the international level, Croatia strives to be included as much as possible in international trends and to be present in new emissive markets. Apart from an already developed holiday tourism of a high seasonality, efforts are made to develop other forms of tourism in order to achieve an "added value" destination reputation.

On the other hand, customers prefer the maximum dedication of the offer, they are curious, willing to pay more for more expertise. For example, a tourist does not want him to be recognized in a "new environment" but to be deeply integrated into the destination

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story. They prefer a fun, relaxing and welcome atmosphere as well as details that associate experiences with the authenticity of the visit site and simple consumption. Often, demand consume experiences but the supply side do not fully realize the problem of unsufficient tourism education or knowledge. Designing attractions does not attach great importance even though they transfer the guests to destinations (make them globally recognized).

The central research hypothesis is: *Removal of externalities in tourism through tour operator specialization and education can be realized by reflecting sustainable business activities on a tourist destination product.* If the local community has knowledge of tourism and a growing awareness of the importance of „special interest tourism“, it is becoming more and more a tourist memorabilia through new experiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is a highly propulsive¹ activity. Specialisations require establishment of the destination management in tourism practice for the purposes of improvement of stakeholder coordination and partnership. This is necessary in order to unite the tourism system, which is fragmented into public and private sectors, local population and numerous associations, in order to avoid externalities. A country in which tourism is the domineering sector among others builds its capacity in order to satisfy mass tourism demand or high peak demand. With this very often comes a construction boom, a housing bubble and a high price market (Šergo, Gržinić, Sučić Čevra, 2017;432).

Within the context of removal of externalities by tourism specialisation, attractiveness also needs to be observed with special attention. Namely, appeal or attractiveness is perceived as the primary and one of the leading motivators of tourists for visiting a tourism destination and

for consuming a tourism product. It has been the main topic of numerous discussions and the subject of various researches. A direct link is thus created between a tourism destination's attractiveness and its attraction basis, as well as its comparative advantages.

When it comes to the relationship between the quality and the process of specialisation in tourism, besides other things, we must emphasise that it is important that it is managed in all business segments. This concerns business processes and functions, marketing, staff motivation, communication and other (Šimičić, 2015). However, in this context attractiveness is examined from another aspect (different aspects of sustainability). By specialising its products, a tourism destination develops the quality of tourist attractiveness. This has an impact also on the creation of a recognisable image in the international tourism market, which has a crucial role in the context of affirmation of quality, attraction of guests and guarantee of a competitive position. Realisation and maximisation of attractiveness of a tourism product is a complex task. Within its framework, it is important to ensure the required infrastructural support, establish partnerships, educate tourism workers, network economic subjects, arrange the localities, valorise and revitalise the whole space and undertake a series of other activities (Glojnarić, 2016). Creative and cultural industries have a powerful impact on the development of the destination entrepreneurial initiatives using „smart specialisations“. There is a particular need to consider personnel risks (frequent lack of necessary expertise).

Specialised tourism forms are nearly connected to sustainable tourism education. Educational tourism *theory* provides a range of approaches; from models of the curriculum to the relationship between the curriculum and its surrounding context (Cooper, 2002).

„Sustainable tourism policy goals“ leads to a new approaches of sustainable education. Tourism is a highly unusual economic development tool that is well suited to preserving both environmental and social capital (...)” (Wood: 2017, 83). Otherwise, we need to accept the consequences.

1 “The travel and *tourism* industry is one of the *world's* largest industries with a *global* economic contribution (direct, indirect and induced) of over 7.6 trillion U.S. dollars in 2016.” STATISTA, *Global travel and tourism industry - Statistics & Facts*, <https://www.statista.com/topics/962/global-tourism>

Today's sustainable tourism is oriented to responsible teaching strategies (Edelheim, 2015). This is important in the context of numerous economies depending on tourism in order to avoid negative externalities. Responsible model of education include: focus lessons, guided instructions, collaborative learning, independent work (Fisher, 2008). «New tourism approach» discusses the current human resources environment in tourism at a strategic policy level, especially in the area of management level education are necessary. Numerous authors took tourism education „practice“ in the focus of their interest. Amoah and Baum (1997) designed a framework which is being used to study consultation between the makers of tourism and education policy at a national level. Koh (1995) indicate that there is lack of standardisation and relevance of undergraduate tourism curriculum to the tourism industry's needs. Curriculum need to be reflection of internal structure (market changes), external factors like social, economic, cultural challenges (McKercher, 2002) and „has tended to concentrate on appropriate vocational elements“ (Tribe, 2001, Prebežac, Schott, Sheldon: 2014).

According to other group of authors tourism educators are little or no involved with the tourism surrounding and practice. Students of tourism and recreation should be prepared to promote tourism which offers a range of different benefits, not only educational ones (Omelan, Huk-Wieliczuk, Podstawski: 2015), but this is not a case. For example, there are only few programs which represent connection between education level and career patterns of employed staff in Croatian tourism and hospitality sector (Perman, Mikinac: 2014). Other are without strongly influence of the students and consequently on economy.

The future problem will be how to retain students where there is so complex tourism market issue and high policy objectives (McManners, 2017). The maturity of the curriculum subject (with no practice reflection and intention of interdisciplinary knowledge) will not provide a common mission of tourism stakeholders in their attention to avoid externalities. Solution is in specific industry-related problems and issues (Fidgeon, 2011) according to sustainable

tourism education approach based upon human perception and values (Herremans & Reid, 2002). Rapid change of tourism market involves the change of tourism education concept toward new sustainable products (for destinations, different ages and required activities).

3. TOURISM MEDIATORS – SPECIALISATION AND EDUCATION

3.1. Tour operators and “new roles” in tourism value chain

Development of innovative products is becoming a prerequisite for the survival of tour operators. Innovations, quality and monitoring competitiveness are beginning to form the main part of strategic activity. Tour operators design new products, respect tourists' individual wishes and create experiences in travel. Flexible packages are introduced, tourists' personal wishes respected, organisational structure is changed, marketing strategies are innovated, etc. Tour operator development is based on: (Gržinić, 2014)

- Creation of consumer loyalty, although it is difficult to build and expect it in an extremely price sensitive market segment;
- Development of highly specialised products with a high added value with internalisation of quality, better coverage of fixed costs and additional investment;
- Group travel (all inclusive);
- Advisory role, assistance, stressing the role of the local communities in sustainable development, as they are competitive (online agents) and successful because they do not create products, but distribute them, due to which they achieve better prices.

Tourism is characterised by high risks and competitiveness which have emerged in the market due to granting of big discounts on group travel and the emergence of Internet booking and low budget carriers. This is the

reason why tour operators, apart from classical travel packages, also offer so-called tailor-made or packages created to suit consumers' wishes. Tourism mediation can survive in a whole range of different offers. Clients determine where they wish to spend their holiday, how and at what cost. The business focus is on meeting the clients' wishes and offers of individual packages (for example, Premium offers), which provide high quality at a high price.

On the other side, there is a need for the principles of liquidity and then profitability to be respected, i.e. a need to monitor a company's exposure to management risks. In the hotel business, risk growth increased during the financial crisis (Jansone, Voronova, 2012, Bharwani, Mathews, 2012), which was the reason for tour operators being excluded from the offer distribution chain and the difficulty of their reinclusion (reintermediation).

Tour operators are oriented towards monitoring of categories such as: seasonal demand behaviour, web page appearance, dynamic packaging by daily prices, "low cost" and "city break" offers, product added values, transport diversification, size of transport/ aircraft, flexibility of hotel contracts (payment of commission for information and advisory services and the point of cost coverage). Namely due to the volatile character of tourism, managers make decisions based on attitudes/ risk assessments (Legohérel et al, 2004, Williams, Baláž, 2014).

Tailor made offers (offers made to suit tourists' needs) record a considerable increase and generally begin to engage in specialisations (for example TUI, TULMARE, THOMAS COOK, KUONI).

Also, smaller tour operators, who cannot keep pace with larger tour operators who are surviving thanks to the tradition, established relationships, strong partnerships and conglomerates, opt for various specialisations to respond to clients' specific needs (according to age groups; for example SAGA, with products such as CYCLING TOURS, RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL, with destinations, I.D. RIVA, with activities, CLUB MED).

Destination management companies (DMC) are being established in destinations which, in the role as receptive tourist agencies, offer and realise specialisations.

Their advantages lie in the fact that they are:

- familiar with the receptive market,
- dependent resources-wise, but are also highly work-intensive,
- Connect more easily with the stakeholders from the surrounding area and give support to specialisations,
- proponents of new attractions by which they encourage destination success,
- creators of complex, high quality tourism products.

Their comparative advantage is the power of:

- attracting the emissive market,
- easier access to service providers,
- concept of safety, security and quality.

For all named categories tourism expertise are needed. Market success is not achievable without consumer opinion about its reflection in every business segment.

3.2. Know-how market orientation

To retain competitiveness, the large ones will enter specialisation areas and vice-versa. They will be attesting the quality through clients' reviews, public relationships, management of the cultural heritage, consumers, proactive activities, memberships in renowned national and international agencies associations (for example, ABTA, UHPA, ECTTA).

Personnel who will know-how to handle the market challenges using specialised knowledge, but at the same time are aware of the global changes in international tourism, will assist in improvement of services, development and offer of tourism products through new ideas and "smart specialisations" (table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. Learning goals (university programme) and smart tourism specialisation

Learning goals	"Smart touroperators" specialisation
Travel planning	New cultural experiences Industrial tourism Responsible tourism destinations Volonteur tourism Virtual tourism destinations Creative tourism industry/products New added tourism values Risk management Premium offer Quality differentiation Cultural networks Visitor experience Repositioning of tourism destination Tourism expenditure and destination Seasonality minorisation Tourism competitiveness On line imidge (reputation) Climate changes observations
Introduction to travel and tourism destinations	
Tourism and influences	
Importance of consumers in the tourism sector	
Team work in the travel and tourism sector	
Exploration of travel and tourism destinations	
Delivery and improvement of experiences to consumers in the travel and tourism sector	
Work in the travel and tourism sector	
Business environment	
Promotion and sales	
Opportunities in tourism	
Destinations and cultures	
External effects and pressures in tourism	
Image and perception	
Political and economic effects	
Technological development, Challenges and trends	

Source: Authors source according to Fidgeon, P. (2011), Oxford, Cambridge & RSA Examinations (2009) Level 1 H848 Principal Learning in Travel and Tourism; Level 2 H849; Level 3 H850, p. 37.

Smart specialisation (gradation of product) need to be integrated into the business mission (creation of networks of knowledge and of creative climate).

3.3. Eco tours

Due to an increased ecological awareness as a consequence of large climatic changes and pollution, the logical sequence is the development of eco products. Tour operators are aware of the importance of sustainable development and create various eco packages

(so-called "green packages") as a response to an ever-increasing demand for them. An "Eco tour" can be travel which is entirely based on low gas emission means of transport, eco preserved foodstuff, Eco labelled hotels, high level of energy protection and similar. The majority of described places offer meals in organically certified facilities or restaurants (50 or even 100% organic). In Croatia, very attractive organic travel is rare concept of offer. Although this concept has been present throughout Europe for a long time, on the aforementioned page for Croatia, only one accommodation

facility is offered which belongs to the category of such travel (holiday home “Hvareno” on the island of Hvar). The food is served in a traditional tavern “konoba” and natural, organic, seasonal ingredients and organically produced wine are served.

Croatia is included in the map of a new cultural route “Destination Napoleon”, which represents a stimulus for the development of new, innovative tourism products based on sustainable development. The creation of new products in Istria is extremely successful and well accepted by both hosts and guests (for example, Istra Inspirit, Escape castle Svetvinčenat and other offers which integrate several different specialisations; mostly enogastronomy. This is a result of intensive public and private sector coordinated activities. Further opportunity is in a stronger valorisation of new technologies in tourism sector.

3.4. New tourism systems and stakeholder partnerships

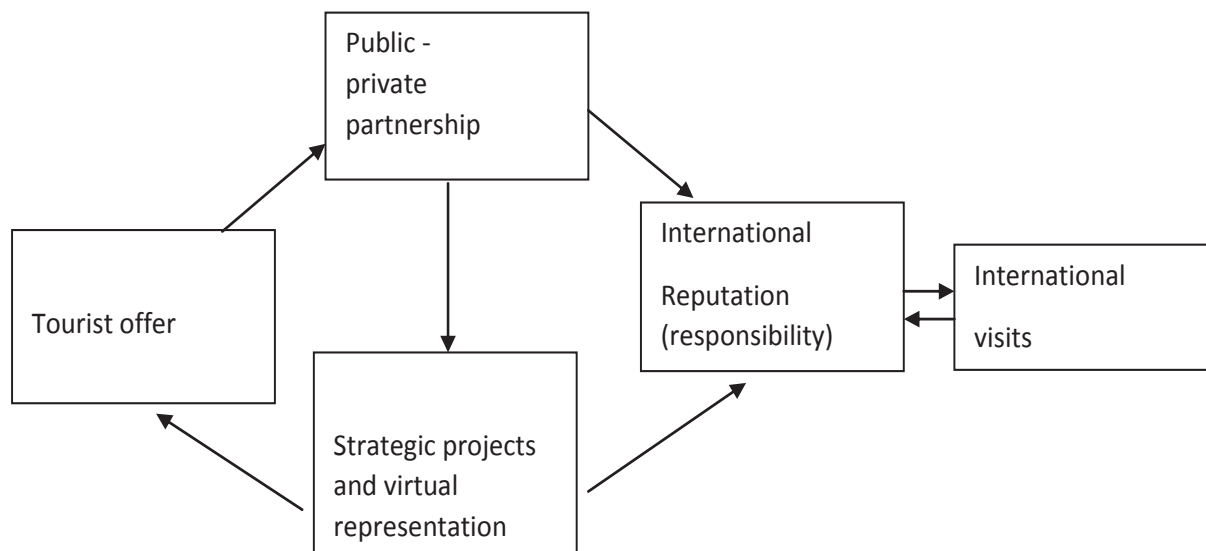
Global technology network of bidders and clients facilitates last-minute booking in the destination itself, Hand-picked tours

and activities (for example VIATOR). Global tourism services create a travel experience in accordance with client's wishes and needs. Viator is also a service, oriented towards research, planning and encouragement of innovations in the businesses of subjects it brings together for the purposes of improvement of sales. It was established in 1995 and, since 2014, it has been a part of TripAdvisor authority, including in its offer approximately:

- 15,000 tours, attractions and excursions,
- 6,000 private guides in 1,000 destinations,
- Connection with small local operators/agents.

Company has a numerous excellent expert teams throughout the world, which facilitate exceptional experiences. Some of the travellers who have used this global service share authentic photographs and reviews to make it easier for others to make their choice. The Viator's idea is to maximally facilitate travel organisation; this is why, using this service, pre-bookings can be made through the Internet, as well as bookings in the place of stay itself. They provide 24/7 support.

Scheme 3.1. Strategic framework for encouragement of competitiveness of tourism



Source: Author's

Partners who are involved in business activities within Viator are not only online travel agencies but also classical tourist agencies and tour operators, airlines, hoteliers and destination guides. Tour operators can, therefore, enter

market processes of reintermediation (adoption of new roles and awareness of their positions) instead of disintermediation (removal from the distribution chain).

4. SUPPORT OF SPECIALISATIONS – EXAMPLE OF CROATIAN TOURISM

4.1. Specialisations and long-term planning of tourism

Destinations which consider short-term benefits from tourism do not take future advantage from the aspect of socio-cultural, economic and ecological impacts on destinations. More accurately, this situation calls into question retention and repetition of visits. It concerns economies which, in tourism, find rescue for national economies. Destination management helps establish stakeholder partnerships (from the high authority through entrepreneurs, institutions and associations, to the local community and other stakeholders). It is believed that, apart from these reasons, lack of long-term tourism development planning is also due to a lack of cooperation between

stakeholders, a lack of information, a poor educational system, a lack of networking, too much focus on profit, a lack of research and monitoring of exemplary modern trends at the international level and similar (Jelinčić, 2009).

Example of good practice is that EU members can apply for joint projects with countries which are not members of integration. It is, however, surprising that cooperation with Canada and Mexico, as the USA's neighbouring countries, is neglected in the tourism context. The USA is characterised by a "bottom-up" approach to tourism development, which can be of considerable help to the European countries instead of developing tourism exclusively within the boundaries of their own countries. Such relationships are being globally intensified. Public invitation for projects of tourism initiatives are developed in a new popular tourism destinations (table 4.1.).

Table 4.1. Financial allocations in Croatian tourism

SOURCES	PURPOSE	FUNDS	DURATION
National sources,	Non-refundable funds in tourism sector		
EU funds	Measures 6.2 and 6.4 – Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia	50,000.00–200,000.00 €	Up to 2020
HBOR*	Preparation for the season, private sector EU project loans (co-financed by ESI funds) and encouragement of employment	80,000.00-10,000,000.00 HRK*	Payment deadline – 15 yrs. annually
MINT*	Grants for development of cyclotourism on the continent (non-refundable) Competitiveness of tourism economy project (non-refundable) investment in green businesses – label "Friends of the Environment", or EU label 'Ecolabel'. Local community sustainable development programme (co-financing)	5,000,000.00 HRK 400,000.00 – 24,600,000.00 HRK 1,000,000.00 HRK	In 2018
HTZ*	Public invitation for event grants: in pre and post season periods (PPS* periods) for national and regional events TOP events	As per assessment	
	Public invitation for grants for projects of tourism initiatives and products in undeveloped tourist areas in 2018		

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE	Transnational cooperation (non-refundable):		
	Innovation and knowledge development Low CO2 economy Natural and cultural resources Transport	60,000,000.00 €	
Interreg V A Italy- Croatia CBC Programme 2014 – 2020	Increase in competitiveness and employment, preservation of natural resources and destination management (blue innovations, safety and resistance related to adaptation to climatic changes and natural catastrophes, environment and cultural heritage, sea transport)	85% acceptable costs	2014 – 2020

*HBOR (Croatian bank for reconstruction and development), MINT (Ministry of tourism), HTZ (Croatian national tourism board), PPS (before and after season), HRK (Croatian national currency)

Source: *Portal on EU funds*, <http://www.eu-projekti.info>, *Interreg, Central Europe*, <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/projects/projects.html>

Financial initiatives support realisation of preconditions for specialisations and guarantee of long-term sustainable development which will be based on respect for tourists' wishes and needs, the local community and other stakeholders in tourism. It is believed that such a strategic framework can also be of use to other tourism destinations of similar type and development possibilities.

4.2. Role of specialisations and departure from seasonality

Tourism specialisations can have a powerful influence on certain selective forms of tourism. This mostly concerns cultural tourism (creative cultural tourism). Some destinations can talk of specialisations in the context of decreasing overcrowding of destinations with tourist arrivals (for example, Dubrovnik, Venice and Barcelona) and orientation towards the concept of "less is more". The above listed destinations are in the situation of an uncontrolled and unplanned tourism development. The main cause of this condition is the rapid growth of cruising tourism and associated externalities. Dubrovnik must adopt a systematic strategy of tourism development as it is becoming a city of contradictions which tourists are beginning to avoid. Due to a large number of cruise ships (up to 5,000 visitors in a single day), the question imposes of sustainability of the local ambience and infrastructure, as well as of the risk of a "deceived tourist". It is necessary to

particularly elaborate leading selective forms and specialisations over a wider area in order to relocate visits and to, generally speaking, manage visits more rationally. It is important here to pay special attention to realistic possibilities in the sense of development of innovative, authentic integrated tourism products, where a cultural tourism product is the basis for consideration. This does not concern the development of a dual image (a strong cultural and natural resource foundation is the basis of promotion) but of differentiation within this market niche. For improvement of the current position, it is necessary to implement the action plan which is conceived in four phases, namely (*Institute for Development and International Relations*, 2014):

1. Planning;
2. Implementation;
3. Monitoring;
4. Adaptation.

Moreover, it is necessary to carry out a whole series of activities by which conditions will be created for sustainable development of tourism and culture, but also to make sure that specialisations in cultural tourism are implemented. It includes the following activities (IRMO, 2014, 67-69):

- Strengthening of sustainable use of material and non-material heritage – the project of urban revitalisation and regeneration, promotion of preservation and use of cultural heritage;

- Improvement of space and resource management – respect for realistic needs;
 - Improvement of the existing and construction of new infrastructure – improve the system of culture management for the needs of cultural tourism and specialisations within it, restore and build new facilities, develop and upgrade technological infrastructure;
 - Development of cultural work for the needs of the local community and tourism – orientation towards tourists and the local community, active holiday, authentic experience, modern presentation of cultural heritage;
 - Development of cultural entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in tourism – bearers of activities, importance of cooperation and networking;
 - Strengthening of mobility and international cooperation – networking, projects, exchange of experiences and knowledge, residential programmes;
 - Stimulating audience participation in the creation of culture and cultural contents in tourism – informing, education and projects;
 - Development of cultural tourism encouragement projects – quality modern creation;
 - Improvement of culture management and establishment of management of cultural tourism development;
 - Development of human resources – education, lifelong education;
 - Improvement of the financing system – EU funds, budget revision.
- In 2018, activities are being conducted within the framework of the “Respect the City” project (action plan with the clear goal of sustainable development and management of Dubrovnik), which is the consequence of the UNESCO warning about unsustainability of the destination. A review of activities with advantages and disadvantages of its implementation in the future is given in table 4.2.

Table 4.2. “Respect the City” project activities

ACTIVITIES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Setting of regulations	Higher traffic fluidity Prevention of delays	Difficulties of road maintenance
Cooperation and coordination of competent authorities	Retention of inherited values	Undeveloped overall infrastructure (structure overloading) Urban plans
Analysis of experiences so far	Possibility of widening of partnerships	Unstable environment
Better schedule of arrivals of ships and delivery vehicles in the “Old city” (up to 4,000 visits)	Visit management	Lack of public policies as support to processes
Destination sustainability	High ecological standard and preserved ecosystems Preservation of beaches	Cross-border impacts on sustainability (pollution) Lack of application of renewable energy sources
Communal and traffic policing	Alleviation of local population living conditions	Insufficient protection of heritage which is accessible to everyone
Expansion of pedestrian zones	Linking of destination tourism products	Concentration of activities within limited periods of time and in limited locations (time-space compression)
Unburdening of suburban zones of tourist information points	EU Funds and finding alternatives	Insufficient encouragement of specialisations Human migration

Source: Prepared by the author according to Pejkočić (2017; 32-3) and personal observation (04.05.2018).

According to Franković (2018), the aim of the project is to “unite the tourism development strategy, the plan of historical centre management and other strategic documents. The project will include sustainable tourism short-term goals which we can achieve as early as this year and in years to come, as well as long-term goals”.

All of the above stated should be fully implemented, mutually integrated and systematically controlled. It is only by such a practice that it would be possible to realise the prerequisites for specialisations in tourism at all and therewith also in what is cultural and dominant in presentation of the city towards emissive markets.

5. DISCUSSION

The research has shown that the role of stakeholders in removing outsourcing should be the focus of further scientific studies in tourism. Combination of various factors, such as trends and impacts, plays an important role of global tourism environment.

To develop tourism business in unpredictable environment, specialisations and education in tourism are crucial for successful business, competing, positioning, but also for the development of tourism destinations in “new age”. For their successful practice and utilisation of their positive impacts, it is important to fulfil specific prerequisites which, in practice, are often achieved. It can be claimed that, nowadays, specialisations are so important and, given their components, they represent a kind of developmental strategy of modern tourism destinations.

6. CONCLUSION

In a long-term destination must be oriented and directed towards sustainable tourism development. While the majority of stakeholders in tourism are oriented towards the profit and creation of additional income in tourism, realistic circumstances and possibilities for development of destination tourism can be realised also through benefits of the forms of selective tourism.

Implementation of a concrete reform is therefore proposed, as well as adoption of a phased action programme which would, content-wise, be determined by a series of guidelines, as specific recommendations for improvement of the current position and for provision of terms for implementation of specialisations, especially in Croatian cultural tourism as a developmental strategy of this selective form of tourism. The grounding for implementation of the aforementioned is provision of financial means, where budget revision and use of EU funds within the framework of implementation of concrete projects have a special role.

Future research should be duly directed towards the analysis of tourism externalities and examination of the attitudes of destination stakeholders towards it. It is important that this research is repeated in some future scientific study as an indicator of changes in tourism activity. Open questions and recommendations for future research in this field should be focused on community organisations (stakeholders) and their perception, resident opinions of tourism and attitude and also aspects of the quality of tourism visit (safety, local services, new experiences).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is a result of scientific - research project „Identification of externalities in the modelling of sustainable development of tourism“ supported by the Faculty of Economics and Tourism „Dr. Mijo Mirković“, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Faculty of Economics and Tourism „Dr. Mijo Mirković Pula”.

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