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IDENTITY OF A TOURISM DESTINATION AND THE NEED OF LINKING IT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

*“Look at things closer and
you can see their real nature”*

*Su Tung-Po, 1037-1101,
a great Chinese poet.*

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Abstract. *The article considers the modern conditions influence of world development, which are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and rapid technological progress on the tourism activity dynamics and the need to find a new business models for competitiveness ensuring and sustainable development in the tourism sector. The concepts of “tourist identity of location”, “tourist attractiveness of territory” are clarified and expanded. The main factors affecting the correlation between the tourist identity of the destination and tourism sustainable development, in accordance with the M. Lindstrom “Manifesto of the Seven Pillars”, who fully discloses the marketing approach to formation and diversification of tourist product, are considered and analyzed. It is determined that the main factor for the formation and maintenance of the tourist identity of each direction is the physical environment – nature, infrastructure and superstructure, with their respective specific characteristics, as well as history and culture, lifestyle, traditions and beliefs, creative and innovative views of population. The study is based on the idea that the individuality of each tourist destination is a prerequisite for observing the principles of sustainable development and neutralizing the negative consequences arising through the application of marketing approaches to ensure better interaction between the demand and supply of tourism services. Based on the study, it was concluded that the limited capacity of tourism resources, on the one hand, and the growing need of the world’s population for active participation in tourist trips, on the other hand, require actions by parties interested in the tourism business at different levels for resources conserve providing of quality services.*

Keywords: *tourism destination identity; principles of sustainable tourism development; Lindstrom’s marketing model.*

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ІДЕНТИЧНІСТЬ ТУРИСТИЧНОЇ ДЕСТИНАЦІЇ ТА НЕОБХІДНІСТЬ ЇЇ ВЗАЄМОЗВ’ЯЗКУ З ПРИНЦИПАМИ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ ТУРИЗМУ

Ракаджійська, С. Ідентичність туристичної дестинації та необхідність її взаємозв’язку з принципами сталого розвитку туризму // Вісник соціально-економічних досліджень : зб. наук. праць (ISSN 2313-4569); за ред. : М. І. Зверякова (голов. ред.) та ін. Одеса : Одеський національний економічний університет. 2018. № 4 (68). С. 212–219.

Анотація. *У статті розглянуто вплив сучасних умов світового розвитку, які характеризуються високим ступенем невизначеності і стрімким технологічним прогресом, на динаміку туристичної діяльності та необхідність пошуку нових бізнес-моделей для забезпечення конкурентоспроможності та сталого розвитку в туристичній сфері. Уточнено та розширено поняття «туристичної ідентичності місцеположення», «туристичної привабливості території». Розглянуто та проаналізовано основні фактори, що впливають на кореляцію між туристичною ідентичністю місця призначення і стійким розвитком туризму, відповідно до «Маніфесту семи стовпів» М. Ліндстрома, який повністю розкриває маркетинговий підхід до формування і диверсифікації туристичного продукту. Визначено, що основним фактором для формування та підтримки туристичної ідентичності кожного напрямку є фізичне середовище – природа, інфраструктура і надбудова, з їх відповідними специфічними характеристиками, а також історія і культура, спосіб життя, традиції і вірування, творчі та новаторські погляди населення. Дослідження засновано на ідеї про те, що*

індивідуальність кожного туристичного напрямку є необхідною умовою для дотримання принципів сталого розвитку та нейтралізації негативних наслідків, що виникають, шляхом застосування маркетингових підходів для забезпечення країної взаємодії попиту і пропозиції туристичних послуг. На підставі проведеного дослідження зроблено висновок про те, що обмежена ємність туристичних ресурсів, з одного боку, і зростаюча потреба населення світу в активній участі в туристичних поїздках, з іншого боку, вимагають дій зацікавлених в туристичному бізнесі сторін на різних рівнях, щоб зберегти ресурси при наданні якісних послуг.

Ключові слова: ідентичність туристичної дестинації; принципи сталого розвитку туризму; маркетингова модель Ліндстрома.

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ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ДЕСТИНАЦИИ И НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ ЕЕ ВЗАИМОСВЯЗИ С ПРИНЦИПАМИ УСТОЙЧИВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ ТУРИЗМА

Ракаджийска, С. Идентичность туристической дестинации и необходимость ее взаимосвязи с принципами устойчивого развития туризма // Вестник социально-экономических исследований : сб. науч. трудов (ISSN 2313-4569); под ред. : М. И. Зверькова (глав. ред.) и др. Одесса : Одесский национальный экономический университет. 2018. № 4 (68). С. 212–219.

Аннотация. В статье рассмотрено влияние современных условий мирового развития, которые характеризуются высокой степенью неопределенности и стремительным технологическим прогрессом, на динамику туристической деятельности и необходимость поиска новых бизнес-моделей для обеспечения конкурентоспособности и устойчивого развития в туристической сфере. Уточнены и расширены понятия «туристической идентичности местоположения», «туристической привлекательности территории». Рассмотрены и проанализированы основные факторы, влияющие на корреляцию между туристической идентичностью места назначения и устойчивым развитием туризма, в соответствии с «Манифестом семи столпов» М. Линдстрома, который полностью раскрывает маркетинговый подход к формированию и диверсификации туристического продукта. Определено, что основным фактором для формирования и поддержания туристической идентичности каждого направления, является физическая среда – природа, инфраструктура и надстройка, с их соответствующими специфическими характеристиками, а также история и культура, образ жизни, традиции и верования, творческие и новаторские взгляды населения. Исследование основано на идее о том, что индивидуальность каждого туристического направления является необходимым условием для соблюдения принципов устойчивого развития и нейтраллизации возникающих негативных последствий путем применения маркетинговых подходов для обеспечения лучшего взаимодействия спроса и предложения туристических услуг. На основании проведенного исследования сделан вывод о том, что ограниченная емкость туристических ресурсов, с одной стороны, и растущая потребность населения мира в активном участии в туристических поездках, с другой стороны, требуют действий заинтересованных в туристическом бизнесе сторон на разных уровнях, чтобы сохранить ресурсы при предоставлении качественных услуг.

Ключевые слова: идентичность туристической дестинации; принципы устойчивого развития туризма; маркетинговая модель Линдстрома.

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1. Introduction

Mankind today lives in a complex geo context: significant climatic changes and natural disasters, economic, political, social and physical insecurity, conflicts of identities on ethno-cultural and religious grounds, substantial technological innovations in the life and relations of people. David Scowsill, the ex-president of WTTC, remarked in one of his speeches: “We have seen major geopolitical movements – from the Arab Spring to the rise in populism; the rising number and changing nature of terrorist attacks, particularly in Western countries; the growing economic power of China and India; the rise of the sharing economy; the move to mobile; and a wide awareness of and almost complete acceptance of the urgency with which we need to address climate change. Our world in 2017 is uncertain, vulnerable, and unpredictable. Despite this, Travel & Tourism (T&T) growth has remained at around 4% a year. Low cost carriers, TripAdvisor, online hotel aggregators,

the sharing economy – these new business models and approaches have changed the landscape of Travel & Tourism forever. However, No large brand name has gone bankrupt, even with the competitive pressures and impacts of the global financial crisis. This ability to adapt to market forces, respond to consumer demand and adopt new technologies is what I believe ensures the future of the Travel & Tourism business.”

The impact of world tourism on what is happening on the planet is becoming more and more tangible and on a greater scale. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [1] and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) [2] for 2017, tourism generates 1 in 10 jobs worldwide, or 118 454 000 million, representing 3.8% of the total employment, and it indirectly contributes to 313 221 million or 9.9% of total employment. It generates a direct effect of US \$ 2,570 billion or 3.2% of GDP, along with indirect and induced impacts, generating US \$ 8,272.3 billion of revenue equivalent to 10.4% of global GDP (all direct, indirect and induced impacts included); it has an impact on the development of 25 regions and 185 countries. The money spent by foreign tourists to the amount of US \$ 1,494.2 billion represents 6.5% of all world exports and 30% of global exports of services. Capital investment amounts to US \$ 882.4 billion or 4.5% of all investment.

However, the real development of tourism shows that for many responsible, state institutions and business factors sustainable tourism is associated only with growth in the number of tourists, volume of sales, revenue volume, rate of profits.

Tourism destinations are seen as “*restaurants – if a word spreads they are good – crowds of visitors start invading them*” [3]. The fact that high season is too short for the various types of tourism strengthens the desire to exploit tourism resources both extensively and intensively on the principle “as much as possible”. Even the declining profitability of a tourism activity, due to strong price competition, is not a reason to limit the development of a tourism business. If, however, the price, as low as possible, generates tourist flow, the tourism business continues growing, drawing on new resources without much care for their protection. The unjustified expansion of a tourism business on this basis leads to the failure of the business itself, owing to the waste of potential of attractiveness of the host destination, so eventually tourists “forget” about it.

In some of the destinations tourists take up the predominant share of the population in a particular territory, exceeding the number of locals by several times; transport infrastructure is over-exploited; the local service environment is changing in favor of souvenir shops, dining and entertainment establishments; the destination appearance starts changing as a result of the architectural decisions related to the construction of new hotels and other aspects of the tourism services super- and infrastructure. Thus, oversaturation with tourists on a particular populated territory causes the hostility of the local population towards tourists. Recently, the population of Barcelona, Majorca, San Sebastián, and also of Hawaii, Cancun, Pattaya, Venice and other world destinations, have been protesting by raising slogans “Tourists go home. It’s not tourism – it’s an invasion.”

Example: *Venetians have been protesting against tourism, which, according to them, has had a devastating impact. The city’s population, which welcomes 28 million tourists a year, has fallen from 175,000 since the Second World War to 55,000 today. About 2,000 people move out of town each year. According to the protesters – Venice is bound to become a city with tourists only. They demand for a ban on cruise ships that gorge out 44,000 tourists per day in just a few hours, even though these tourists are only 1.5 million, at an average age of 65, spending between 120 and 160 euros and bringing a profit of 250 million euros per year, generating 5000 jobs.*

Comparative research [4] reveals that residents in highly developed tourism areas are already assessing the importance of potential adverse impacts comparing them to the economic and socio-cultural benefits of tourism, in the following order:

Environment protection > economic > social > cultural
benefits cost benefits

The aggravation of conflict situations between tourists and the local population in most cases also reflects the *demonstrated differences and inconsistencies in the social and economic status, culture and education, religion, political views and ethnicity of the different groups, the result being often measured in physical, moral or material damage.*

The aim of this research is to present the way Lindstrom's "Manifesto of the Seven Pillars" can be used to link the tourism identity of every destination with the principles of sustainable tourism development.

2. Tourism destination identity

In order to be able to formulate a definition of the identity of a place/location/destination, these concepts will be used as synonyms, we should first ask a few questions: Why does a place become a destination to visit?; Why are some places very popular to visit?; Why can imitation of identity also be a major attraction for visitors?

There is a popular saying that tourism for modern life is what dreams are for reality – a compensatory phenomenon. Let's think of a few names: The Eiffel Tower, The Great Wall of China, La Sagrada Familia, Taj Mahal, Disney Land, Las Vegas, places that attract more than a dozen to hundreds of thousands of visitors every day. In the numerous charts of the most visited tourist places those constantly present are: the Island of Bali, London, Paris, Rome, New York City, Barcelona, Crete Island, Marrakech, St. Petersburg, Prague, Phuket, Rio de Janeiro, Istanbul, Dubai, Kathmandu, Bora Bora, Cusco (to name just a few of the 25 leading world destinations according to TripAdvisor, 2017).

Some of these places, like the Eiffel Tower, have become iconic – no matter how many pictures, postcards or videos we've seen, there's nothing better than see them *for ourselves*. Then the comments are: "a real memorable experience", "every moment is worth it", "so good – we will be back", "an authentic experience" and so on. In his extraordinary work, E. Weiner [5] writes: "Some places are just like that. As we have seen so many pictures of them, we imagine we are immune from their *magnetic charm*, no matter how strong it is. But when we see them live, they make our heart beat fast and we stand in awe. "Oh!" We can say when we can breathe again. "I had no idea."

Botti and Peypoch (2012) [6] look at the tourist place/destination as "a territorially separate, complex tourism product comprising an ensemble/combination of resources, services and commodities gravitating around attractions *to meet* the needs of a particular market segment. A destination, this is "*the touristicity of the territory*", the authors draw their conclusion.

Touristicity of the territory is a concept used above as a synonym for tourism attractiveness of the territory, a degree of utilization of a certain territory for tourism, a tourism function in a territory (Sv. Rakadzhyska) [7]. An example of the formation of touristicity of a territory can be illustrated with the conditions necessary for the development of mass sea-recreational tourism, as outlined by St. Marinov [8], "a combination of unique natural resources – seawater, beaches, sun, exceptional landscapes, rich biodiversity: birds, fish, plankton, coral, etc.; large-scale technical infrastructure – roads, ports, water supply and sewage installations, water purification plants, etc.; superstructure – hotels, campsites, restaurants, etc.; diversified and highly profitable tourism products – beach, entertainment and sports services, water sports and recreation services – cruises, boat trips, fishing, diving, etc."

When the outlined common factors gain specific characteristics, appearance and "image", the touristicity of the place/destination, in our opinion, becomes the tourism identity of this place/destination.

So, in this way the general term "seaside tourism destination" for example, is materialized into Bali, the Caribbean or the Bahamas, Capri – Italy, Santorini – Greece, Cat Ba Bay – Vietnam, The French Riviera, Costa del Sol – Spain, Albena, Golden Sands, Sunny Beach, Duni – Bulgaria, etc.

Similar are the conclusions drawn on identifying the cultural, historical, pilgrimage destinations such as Florence, Paris, London, Edinburgh, St. Petersburg, Cordoba and Toledo, Lisbon and Alcobas, Lourdes, San Sebastian, Fatima, Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem, Chichen Iza, the Valley of the Kings and the Egyptian Pyramids, Budva and Kotor, Dubrovnik, Veliko Tarnovo and Nessebar as well as all others.

The tourist (individual) is the one who, consciously following the need and motivation to take a tourist trip, identifies his/her “own” destination. Depending on our own identity, the stability or volatility of the destination, an expressed desire for self-actualization or getting rid of some of the different aspects of our own self-identity, each one of us chooses where to go, when to travel and what to do in the chosen destination. To what degree the tourism identity of the place/destination is well-known and recognizable whether it is accepted or rejected by the identity of the person (the group or groups respectively) are the reasons to rank tourism places/destinations by the degree of their attractiveness in ascending or descending order, according to tourists’ assessment/reviews.

Today, people worldwide increasingly feel the need take a tourist trip because of the stressful and monotonous daily routine in their permanent residence, ‘framing’ various manifestations of identity and often imposing unwanted ‘labels’ on the person or group they have self-identified with. On the other hand, the limitations to the authentic features of the tourist identity of the places/destinations that tourists want to visit entail the need for imitation, resembling an already accepted, established tourism identity. The scientific and technological progress and modern technological solutions allow this to happen. The most striking example, in our opinion, is the gambling and entertainment conglomerate in Las Vegas. No less impressive is the natural-cultural reserve on the island of Cozumel, Mexico, where you can admire all the cultural heritage of the Maya, presented with impressive, large-scale models of real artifacts, scattered throughout the country.

A basic factor for building and maintaining the tourism identity of each destination is undoubtedly the physical environment – nature, infra and superstructure, with their respective specific characteristics. The uniqueness, diversity, and strength of attraction of natural resources, as it is proved in the preferences of tourists, will probably remain the leading motives for taking a tourist trip. “Green” tourism, perceived not as a special-interest kind, but as a common characteristics of the future development of tourism in general, in its essential definition as environmentally friendly, will only be possible when strictly preserving nature. The conservation of nature will, in turn, place increasingly complex tasks for the tourism business, state institutions and society, because it is inextricably linked to the infrastructure and superstructure of the tourism destination. Combining nature, infra and superstructure will require new solutions for their peaceful co-existence. Moreover, the more varied the elements of the physical environment, the more attractive a definite place can be for tourists.

The other main “ingredients” of the tourism identity of each destination are its important variables: history and culture, lifestyle, traditions and beliefs, creative and innovative attitudes of the population. Cultural and historical monuments, special events such as festivals, ritual processions, performances, re-enactment of significant historical events, local cuisine and beverages, local crafts, modern kinds of recreation and entertainment of the local population – celebrations, dancing parties and so on attract more and more tourists. While scientific and technological progress leads to “smoothing out” the differences in infra and super-structure, the local historical and cultural image add unique value to the local tourism business.

Being more knowledgeable than ever, seeking novelty and uniqueness, tourists are increasingly interested in authenticity of tourism supply. According to a study by Responsible Travel [9] in 2017, demand for authentic travel has increased by 53%. The predominant choice options are: cruises to archipelagos; family holidays in options such as holidays the Tetra’s in Slovakia, watching solar eclipses, meeting with monkeys in South Africa, meetings local families at the destination, living with Berber families in the Moroccan Sahara; swimming with dolphins in the Azores Sea; sleeping in a “tree-top hotel” in Sweden; donkey mountain trekking of the Alps –

France; cycling round Vietnam; “BB” and encounter of Aborigines in Tasmania; Dinner at Dracula Castle – Romania; “3500 years back in time” – an archaeological tour in Greece; getting to know Tibetan Buddhism in Lhasa – Tibet; fishing and staying in an authentic fishing cabin in Norway etc.

3. Applying the principles of sustainable development of tourism

To apply the concept of sustainable tourism development [10] in a market economy the *World Tourism Organization* recommended applying *the following principles: inclusion of local people* of all social groups in the development of tourism in the host territory as well as providing transparent and publicly available information of the ongoing process; *establishing relations of collective responsibility* in planning, decision making, problem solving, project implementation and evaluation; *implementing a systemic approach to integrated solutions* to the social, economic and environmental problems of the whole system, not just some individual symptoms; *applying environmental constraints* limiting the development of tourism within appropriate limits; *ensuring equality before the law and justice*, demanding respect for human rights, interaction and development of the global cooperative; *implementing long-term, strategic planning* with concern for the future and resolving problems and overcoming conflicts; *adapting economic objectives* to the social and natural environment to minimize negative impacts.

The Commission of the European Communities, in its 2007 Forum Communication in Brussels, named “Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism”, formulated 12 principles for the sustainable development of tourism: *providing local prosperity; ensuring physical integrity of the territories; conservation of biodiversity; ensuring economic viability; guarantee employment quality of the workforce; ensuring social equality; satisfying the visitors demands; implementing continuous monitoring locally; ensuring social welfare; efficient use of resources; preservation and development of cultural heritage; preserved nature and clean environment* [11].

A project between UNWTO [12] and the European Commission provides for the socio-economic knowledge of the tourism sector, for stimulating understanding of the development of European tourism, for supporting economic growth through creating more jobs, proving the sector competitiveness in Europe. The project includes activities in four directions: *expanding partnerships and the amount of tourism statistics info; assessment of market trends; promoting cultural tourism through the Western Silk Road; promoting sustainable, responsible, accessible (for people with disabilities) and ethical tourism*. It calls for taking responsibility, which is an outstanding feature of the low-conflict and balanced development of sustainable tourism, especially in terms of climate change.

4. Marketing to help link the tourism identity of a destination to the principles of sustainable development

Given the changes in demand and the principles of sustainable tourism, diversification of the tourism product is an option for attracting new markets and innovative ideas. Through the “creative thinking” process, it is possible to connect ordinary, familiar things in a new way. It is well known that unsatisfied needs and desires are a good source of business.

According to Ph. Kotler et al [13]. “The experience associated with a product is never an isolated experience.” From this point of view, diversification of the tourism product should be an aim to be fulfilled on the basis of joint creation, which is seen as co-operation between tourism services providers, consumers and intermediaries.

For B. Grancharova [14] “*Marketing decisions in tourism should be based on consumer perceptions and preferences. Driven by his/her motives and preferences and the distinctive features of the destination, the final choice of the potential tourist includes two vectors – unique features of the destination plus a package of benefits.*”

The process of diversification provides a solution to the type and variety of tourism products that are predominantly created on the basis of changing consumer needs. M. Lindstrom [15] believes that “*When you identify an unfulfilled desire, you are very close to finding a gap that can be filled with a new product ... There is an imbalance or an exaggeration in every culture around the world – and that exaggeration hides desire.*”

In the new reality where consumers and digital technologies are leading factors, the correlation between the tourism identity of the destination and the sustainable development of tourism can be found in the so-called “*Manifesto of the Seven Pillars: Collecting, Clues, Connecting, Correlation, Causation, Compensation, Concept*” by M. Lindström [15]. The Manifesto is used as a methodology for conducting interviews to collect information that identifies action when identifying separate target market segments and linking them to diversified tourism products.

The “collection” stage begins with the identification of landmarks – both at macro and micro levels – in order to remove the filter that does not allow reality to be seen. Get to know the views of local observers such as hairdressers, church workers or taxi drivers. They can say what really happens. In tourism – it is mainly the staff, in direct contact with tourists, who can present definite facts and behaviors relatively unbiased. To assess the reliability of information, social media can give us additional insight into the matter – media people are extroverts. The result of this stage is the formulation of a hypothesis.

The “clues” stage is to find details that can actually reveal a cultural context, emotional attitudes, lifestyles. The third pillar “connecting” is the stage of analysis of the collected information to identify the similarities and/or inconsistencies in the collected data as well as the hypothesis formulated. The fourth stage – “correlation” – implies relating the data found to the behavior of consumers (tourists). The “causation” stage should lead the researcher to the respondent’s point of view – why things happen as registered, not otherwise.

It is appropriate to answer questions such as: If we were the respondents, what would we feel, what would we like? The answer may be difficult enough, especially when it comes to belonging to different cultures. A solution can be sought by consulting objective observers once again. The stage of “compensation” should highlight the desire that has not been fulfilled: the need to belong to a group, overcome fear, be free, be in balance with yourself, etc. The last, seventh pillar – “the concept” must help derive the content of the new product in accordance with the respondents’ identified needs/desires.

“Lindstrom Manifesto-7” reveals an entirely marketing approach to the formation and diversification of the tourism product. He opposes it to the “conceptual” decisions of the type “on the boss order” principle, “we need to do it”, “competitors do it” without taking into account tourists’ desires/needs.

5. Conclusions and main outcomes

The development of modern tourism with all its positive and negative effects determines the demand for theoretical arguments and practical solutions to help increase the former and overcoming the latter. The limited capacity of tourism resources, on the one hand, and the growing need of the world’s population to be increasingly involved in tourism travel, on the other hand, demands actions, at different levels of the various stakeholders in the tourism business, in order to preserve resources while providing quality services to tourists. M. Lindström’s “Model of the Seven Pillars” is a good, marketing-oriented strategy. It can link the principles of sustainable development to the specific tourism identity of every destination and ensure the provision of tourism products accordingly, for suitable market segments, while protecting all interests.

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