

MOTIVATED VISITS AND MEETING TOURIST EXPECTATION AS PREREQUISITE FOR TOURIST DESTINATIONS COMPETITION ADVANTAGE

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Abstract:

A tourist destination is desirable if it motivates, with its offer, tourists to visit it and if it meets their expectations. A destination that satisfies these requirements can obtain more tourist visits and a higher offer price. This is what tourism destination marketing is about. Among other things, this kind of marketing examines behaviour and reactions of tourists during their consumption of a destination tourist offer. The study is based on an examination process focused on measuring and establishing motive of arrival, meeting expectations, as well as the price achieved in a specific tourist destination. The research was carried out in the tourist destination of Istria, through a survey model in which 600 tourists participated. The intention of the research was to create a basis for verifying the hypothesis according to which the competitiveness of a tourist destination is closely linked to arrival motives, met expectations and prices connected with that. In addition to this hypothesis, there is a message underlining the necessity to develop destination contents in line with expectations tourists have before their departure.

Keywords: arrival motives, tourist expectations, tourist destination, tourist offer, destination marketing, prices.

Introduction

Marketing is focused on satisfying the needs and demands of consumers. Only with a good knowledge of the market and consumers it is possible to create an offer that meets consumers' needs. Knowing consumers assumes observing their behaviour and reactions in the process of buying (services). It is a very complex work, which is why in the present study the examination was carried out through segments, as reaction of consumers toward the price level in the situation of provided information quantity, motivation and meeting of expectation through the destination tourist offer elements. The research was carried out in the tourist

destination of Istria. The focus of this study is on: the level of information and motivation of tourists and their satisfaction with their destination offer. The research was carried out as a survey, during the tourist seasons of 2003 and 2007 in Istria County¹.

The study contains a hypothesis according to which the tourist offer price level is in a cause-effect link to the level of information provided to tourists, their motivation and met expectations. With the formulated hypothesis it is assumed that informed and motivated tourists, whose expectations are met, would be willing to accept a higher price. Many examination studies support the viewpoint that consumers tend to rely on the price as a quality indicator. This study is focused on analysing the characteristics of tourist demand, in particular as far as the level of information, motivation and met expectations are concerned. This type of examination study will provide the possibility to implement a correct price policy, with the aim of obtaining better effects from tourism, financially and in terms of quantity.

Research methodology

The research methodology in this study regulates the procedure of examining the key elements of the tourist destination competitiveness. Among the key elements of the tourist destination there are: provided information about the tourist offer, motivation of tourists by the offer elements and fulfilled tourists' expectations in their destination.

The listed elements are examined through survey method and statistical method. Surveying tourist helped to reveal the way in which tourists collect information about the offer and to what extent. Further, it revealed how motivated they are by the tourist offer elements, to estimate finally the fulfilment of their expectations in the destination. In addition, through the statistical method it was established the connection between: level of information, motivation, fulfilled tourists' expectations, in relation to prices and elements of the destination's tourist offer.

These data and the research results were used for verifying the formulated hypothesis, according to which information, motivation and met expectations in a tourist destination lead to a greater competitiveness. The formulated hypothesis is examined and confirmed in the case of the tourist destination of Istria.

Research results

The research results published in this study are obtained on the basis of a secondary source data of two surveys carried out in Istria County. Among the surveys' data only those related to the level of information and motivation of tourists, as well as to fulfilled expectations and achieved prices in the tourist destination, were chosen. A comparison of these data reveals the cause-effect link between information, motivation, fulfilled expectations and the level of price, which according to the formulated hypothesis are connected in the following manner

M
?
I ? P ? E

¹The survey of the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism in Porec for the season 2003 with 2.748 questionnaires and in 2007 with 500 questionnaires

where (I) stands for information, (P) prices, (E) fulfilled expectations, (M) motivation. What follows is a series of presentations, which support and confirm the hypothesis.

Tourist information about the destination offer

How successful a marketing programme is depends on many issues connected with consumers' reactions. Some of these issues are linked to the level of information provided, as for example, what media type is the most efficient in delivering a promotional message, which leads to a reaction in the buying process. Tables 1 and 2 show all the data about the level of information provided to tourists in Istria. The data are gathered through a survey with two questions: one was related to the information sources and the other to the level of information estimations. Table 1 shows data about sources and ways of keeping tourists in Istria informed.

Table 1.: Ways of informing tourists in Istria

<i>Ways of informing</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in percentages in 2003</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in percentages in 2007</i>
<i>Earlier stay</i>	5	6
<i>Recommendations of relatives and friends</i>	22	20
<i>Agency recommendation</i>	38	39
<i>Catalogues, brochures, ads, posters, TV, radio</i>	19	18
<i>Internet</i>	12	21
<i>Other</i>	4	2

Source: Survey by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism Porec for the 2003 and 2007 seasons

As shown in Table 1, it is obvious that tourists in Istria obtain information from 5 sources. Among the information sources shown, as far as tourists in Istria are concerned, first are "agencies' recommendations", which were mentioned by 39 per cent of those who participated in the survey. Second is informing via Internet, which was the experience of 21 per cent of the survey participants, third "recommendations of relatives and friends", mentioned by 20 per cent of them, and then there is the classical way of gathering information, through catalogues, brochures, ads, posters, TV, radio. Through an analysis of the information sources in the given period (2003 to 2007) it is possible to notice improvements in the way of gathering information: Internet was in 2003 fourth and in 2007 it was second. Table 2 shows the estimations of the level of information provided to tourists in Istria.

Table 2.: Estimations of the level of information provided for tourists in Istria

<i>Information estimation</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in</i>
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	<i>percentages in 2003</i>	<i>percentages in 2007</i>
<i>Insufficient</i>	19	21
<i>Sufficient</i>	71	62
<i>Full</i>	10	17

Source: Survey by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism Porec for the 2003 and 2007 seasons

As shown in Table 2, in 2007 17 per cent of the survey's participants declared to be "fully" informed and that is 7 per cent more people than in 2003. "Sufficient" was the choice of two per cent less and "insufficiently" informed of two per cent more tourists as compared to 2003. From tables 1 and 2 it is possible to deduce that there have been obvious improvements in the structure of information sources and that the level of (better) informed tourists in Istria is higher now than it was in 2003.

Motivation of tourists' visits to a tourist destination

As Grbac says, by exploring the market "one gathers and elaborates data about characteristics and needs of consumers, attitudes and intentions of the purchase, product brands preferences and else"³. That is why Table 2 shows percentages of tourists' explanations concerning the tourist offer elements that traditionally motivate tourists to come to the tourist destination of Istria. There are 6 main motivators, among which: holiday by the sea, beauties of nature, closeness of the destination, possibility of entertainment in the destination, sport activities, reasonable price and else. Table 3 shows what tourists said about their motives for visiting Istria:

Table 3: Motivation of tourists in Istria

<i>Type of motive</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in percentages in 2003</i>	<i>Tourists' explanations in percentages in 2007</i>
<i>Holiday by the sea</i>	31	37
<i>Beauties of nature</i>	22	23
<i>Closeness</i>	10	11
<i>Possibility of entertainment</i>	4	6
<i>Sport activities</i>	4	9
<i>Reasonable prices</i>	13	11
<i>Else</i>	16	2

Source: Survey by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism Porec for the 2003 and 2007 seasons

Visits to the tourist destination of Istria are mostly motivated by the motive "holiday by the sea" (sun, sea, bathing), which was mentioned by 37 per cent of the survey's participants. Second are "beauties of nature", for 23 per cent of them, whereas third are two motivators, "possibility of entertainment" and "reasonable prices", voted by 11 per cent of tourists surveyed.

Fulfilment of tourists' expectations during their stay in the destination

³ Grbac, Bruno: *MARKETING koncepcija, imperativ-izazov*, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, 2005, p. 392

“Satisfaction refers to the award that derives from the use of the product and that coincides with expectations”⁴. Moreover, Kesic⁵ says that in the model for estimating satisfaction “satisfied/unsatisfied consumers can have three results:

1. Positive confirmation – the product is better than expected,
2. One-sided confirmation – the product coincides with what expected,
3. Negative confirmation – the product is worse than expected”

Table 4 shows the indicators about the fulfilled expectations of tourists during their stay in the territory of the destination of Istria.

Table 4: Fulfilment of expectations of tourists in Istria

<i>Fulfilled expectations</i>	<i>Explanations in percentages for 2003</i>	<i>Explanations in percentages for 2007</i>
<i>Fully fulfilled</i>	53	62
<i>Partly fulfilled</i>	44	36
<i>Unfulfilled</i>	3	2

Source: Survey by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism Porec for the 2003 and 2007 seasons

Thanks to more informed and motivated tourists willing to come to the tourist destination of Istria, there was also a better fulfilment of expectations during these tourists’ stay. Fully fulfilled expectations during the stay in the destination of Istria marked the experience of 62 per cent of the surveyed, 9 per cent more than in 2003. Moreover, a better fulfilment of expectations is also confirmed by the results linked to “partly met”, what was chosen by 8 per cent less tourists, as well as those connected with “unfulfilled”, which dropped by 1 per cent compared to the year 2003.

Acceptability of the tourist offer price

Schiffman and Lazar Kanuk⁶ point out that how consumers see the price, whether as high, low or adequate, has a strong influence on the decision to purchase, as well as on the satisfaction with what is purchased. Following this thought in this paper the acceptability of the tourist offer price was estimated and the indicators are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Estimation of the acceptability of the tourist offer price (grade 1-4, higher is better)

<i>Type of offer</i>	<i>Average grade in Istria in 2003</i>	<i>Average grade in Istria in 2007</i>
<i>Accommodation</i>	2,64	2,70

⁴ Kesic, Tanja: Ponašanje potrošača, ADECO, Zagreb, p. 317

⁵ Kesic, Tanja: p. 318

⁶ Schiffman Leon, G., Lazar Kanuk, Leslie: p. 144

<i>Food</i>	2,69	2,60
<i>Beverage</i>	2,46	2,30
<i>Sport services</i>	2,57	2,80
<i>Other services</i>	2,55	2,70
<i>Average grade</i>	2,58	2,80

Source: Survey by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism Porec for the 2003 and 2007 seasons

The estimation of the tourist offer price acceptability was established on the basis of the main offer elements as accommodation, food, beverage, sport, etc. Tourists who participated in the survey had to choose a grade from 1 – 4. The averages obtained from the grades conferred to each element are between 2,58 (2003) to 2,80 (2007). On the basis of these averages, it is possible to deduce that in 2007 tourists who visited the destination of Istria accept higher prices, which is understandable since it is connected with the level of information, motivation and met expectations, the results of which were also better in 2007 than they were in 2003.

Conclusion

On the basis of the evaluations of the level of information provided, motivation, fulfilled expectations and the level of prices, established in this research with the offer of the tourist destination of Istria as an example, it is possible to confirm the aforementioned relation, where the competitiveness of a tourist destination depends on I, M and E. With well-informed and motivated tourists (by a holiday by the sea, beauties of nature, closeness and reasonable prices), their expectations are met, which leads to a greater competitiveness of the tourist destination.

That supports and confirms the formulated hypothesis, according to which the levels of prices of the tourist offer elements (competitiveness) are within the limits of the level of information, motivation and fulfilled expectations of tourists. The hypothesis is confirmed in two research cases carried out in 2003 and 2007.

The aim of this study was not only to confirm the hypothesis, but also to draw attention to the way in which satisfied as well as unsatisfied consumers in tourism react to the tourist offer consumption. The options are as follows:

1. unsatisfied consumers spread negative experiences with the tourist offer,
2. unsatisfied consumers can decide to never again consume the tourist offer which does not satisfy them,
3. unsatisfied consumers can make a complaint, which is usually followed by the loss of consumer(s).

In order to avoid that, especially the latter, it is necessary to follow how informed and motivated tourists are, as well as the fulfilment of their expectations, and compare all that to the offer price level. Thus the satisfaction of consumers/tourists is achieved and they come back to the destination.

This research can be useful in the implementation of the correct price policy with the aim of obtaining greater competitiveness and better results in tourism, in quality and financially.

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