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# The Role of Environmental Management in Tourism Marketing Development as a Means of Destination Promotion

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*The aim of this article is to study the role of environmental management in the development of tourism marketing as a means of promotion and development of tourist destinations. Initially, there is an attempt to theoretically approach the concept of tourism marketing and then the risks are presented and the problems involved in the implementation of tourism marketing and tourism marketing organization. The article continues with the study of the behavior of the environment in tourism marketing focusing on tourist attraction incentives, the concept of tourism, the concept of the destination image and the expectations of tourists. The article concludes that the various marketing stimuli and not only affect the above-mentioned purchasing process of the individual while they are introduced into the consumer's black box where they are processed. The result of this process is the choices the buyer will make about the good (product or service), the brand, the supplier, the time and the amount of the purchase.*

**Keywords:** Tourism marketing, environmental management, destination image, tourist destinations

**JEL Classification:** M31

## 1. Introduction

The concept of tourism marketing, as well as the broad meaning of the term marketing, is found in the rational way of administration in order to provide for and ultimately to position the tourist products on the market in order to maximize the benefit of the particular business as this is shaped by tourism demand (Vellas, 2016). This is the process whereby tourism businesses using appropriate marketing techniques seek to identify their potential customers and, above all, to identify their wishes, motives and needs in order for their products and services to meet their respective demands (Dolnicar and Ring, 2014).

In short, it is the process of linking the objectives of suppliers of tourism products or services to the needs of tourists, which is mainly oriented towards those activities that precede the production decision and the decision to distribute the goods - services aiming at their profitable distribution mainly for the benefit of

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businesses. Achieving the above objective also requires an examination of attitudes, behaviors and desires of the tourist consumer at the place of his/her permanent residence (Vellas, 2016).

Through tourism marketing, tourism promotion is achieved either for a country or for certain regions, while at the same time promoting alternative forms of tourism (Kelly, Johnston and Danheiser, 2017).

As the tourism industry is one of the most important sources of income, the exploitation of which, especially in our country, is positively affected by the business sector with the application of tourism marketing methods, seeks to gain an ever greater profit. At the same time, the state aims to increase the volume of national tourist income by attempting to maintain or increase the existing sizes of the industry (Peng et al., 2015).

Thus, according to the tourism economics, it can be concluded that the interest and involvement in the implementation of tourism marketing is of concern to both the private sector actors, including the various tourism enterprises and the broader state sector, which includes public enterprises, municipalities, government agencies, chambers, and various tourism organizations (Xiang, Magnini and Fesenmaier, 2015).

## **2. Theoretical Approach to Tourism Marketing**

Mc Donald and Wilson (2016) argue that despite the clear signs that there are common marketing points across all sectors and subsectors of the economic activity, past experience has persuaded many in the tourism industry that there are certain characteristics of tourism services which are so prevalent in their effects, that even these commonly accepted marketing principles need to be adapted appropriately to be able to ensure the success in a functional general context (Mc Donald and Wilson, 2016).

According to Lumsdon (2016), there are five dominant views on supply and demand in the tourism industry, which constitute the basis for its understanding. These five characteristics include the examination of the nature of demand and supply of tourist services, the depiction of tourist services and products and the prices at which they are offered, the recording of the means/methods and promotional features used and have an influence on the provision of tourist services and finally the reference to the distribution methods of products/services to facilitate the demand for tourism services.

Based on the above five characteristics of the demand and supply of tourism services mentioned, Middleton highlights three proposals/approaches for tourism marketing related to all the forms it may take when applied to the tourism industry. These are (Huang et al., 2016):

- Tourism services are designed, produced and promoted in the tourist market to meet specific tourist needs or wishes of those who want and can also satisfy them. This is the common point of tourism marketing with all forms of consumer marketing and the basis of all marketing theory.
- The tourism industries have, among other things, the peculiar features of the perishable and indivisible, which imply a different application of the variables of the marketing mix. This is a common point with those who rightly claim that the marketing of intangible products, namely services, is in fact different from that of material products.
- Tourism marketing is shaped and determined by the nature of demand and the functional characteristics of the industries that make the supply. The forms of promotion and distribution used for tourism services also have their own characteristics that distinguish their use from other industries. These shape the common point on which the tourism marketing is based.

In conclusion, it can be said that according to Middleton the inextricably linked effect of the three above-mentioned proposals is the one that makes tourism marketing different from other marketing forms (Dolnicar and Ring, 2014).

## **3. The Risks and Problems Involved in the Implementation of Tourism Marketing**

Tourism marketing is directly affected by a number of factors, which require special consideration in order to avoid the negative consequences of mistaken decisions and applications. In particular, the inelasticity of the tourism supply, the competition between tourist products and destinations as well as the volatility of tourism demand, which is influenced and shaped by a multitude of socio-economic factors, which require a thorough study (Mc Combes, Vanclay and Evers, 2015).

The implementation of tourism marketing focuses mainly on the planning of the tourism services. Apart from this, however, the specificities of tourism services are decisive for the attitude and decisions taken by the management of the companies that offer them. However, as tourism is a multidimensional and complex sector of activities that includes both products and production units by offering groups of tourists or individual travelers the experiences they seek to satisfy their desires, the implementation of tourism marketing differs significantly from the marketing of goods in general (Kavoura and Stavrianea, 2014).

#### 4. Tourism Marketing Organization

According to Kalfiotis, the term Tourism Marketing Organization means the mechanism through which the management of a tourism business will be able to transform the business theory into practice in terms of Marketing. The organization of tourism marketing defines an entire organic network of operations of people who will deal responsibly with this field and will coordinate the system of operations in a full cooperation to optimize their profitability (Avraham and Ketter, 2016).

For this reason, Tourism Marketing Organization must be based on the knowledge of certain factors that influence its action (Vellas, 2016). The size and type of the tourism business as well as the decisions on the marketing mix are the two key factors that influence the action and application of tourism marketing in order to achieve the required correlations of factors for the best result (Serghei, 2018).

##### 4.1. The Means Used by Tourism Marketing - The 4Ps

The means used by Tourism Marketing to accomplish its planned goals are now known as the 4Ps. These are as follows (Dileep and Mathew, 2017):

**1) Product:** This term includes not only the clean production of the tourism service, but also its design, development, name and supply. This stage requires planning so as to have the right service, at the right place, at the right time, with the right price and the right quality and quantity of the tourism product.

**2) Price:** It is well known that the tourism sector has been rapidly and unreasonably opened up by the action of foreign and private business players, with the result that the negotiating power of domestic players is increasingly diminishing in the formation of the price policy. One of the most important decisions of Marketing is the establishment of the right price. Three cases can be distinguished:

- To sell the tourism product at the market price as all other competitors.
- To sell the tourism product below the market price.
- To sell the tourism product above the market price.

An important parameter for whatever price a tourism company decides to sell its products - services is its customers, since the customers' interest in the price is essential.

**3) Place:** An equally difficult decision is what distribution channels will be used. The choice of the distribution channels comes from:

- an analysis of the tourism service.
- its nature and its position in the tourism market.
- an analysis of sales, costs and profits.
- the expected degree of cooperation and profits.

**4) Promotion:** The purpose of promotional activities is to create demand for the product or service. The term promotion includes advertising, publicity, public relations, and sales promotion. Sales promotion includes all technical means and measures that influence the buyer in order to promote/increase the sales more than could be done with traditional commercial methods.

#### 5. Study and Behavior of the Environment in Tourism Marketing

##### 5.1. Tourist Attraction Incentives

The incentives by which people decide to visit a place within or outside their country's borders are multiple and are inextricably linked to the form of tourism offered by the tourist country, namely the tourist location and the overall organization connecting the host country with the place of origin of the tourists (Siclair-Maragh and Gursoy, 2015).

These incentives differ in terms of intensity, and this intensity is usually measured by sample surveys carried out between visitors to a country or a particular destination at the end of their stay, aimed at verifying the qualitative nature of the incentives. These results are of great importance for the host country in terms of developing a better strategy and policy in tourism marketing (Sharlpey and Telfer, 2015).

The basic incentives for travel - tourism, are of cultural and socio-psychological nature, and on the basis of these incentives the activities that the tourism industry is trying to use and satisfy the wishes of tourists are developed. One could classify the incentives of tourists - visitors to personal incentives, prestige and high social status incentives, and educational incentives (Sharpley, 2015).

In tourism marketing, the purpose is to identify the specific incentives, to perceive the creation of the traveling desire and to study any positive or negative tendency of the prospective traveler, which is related to

the realization of the traveling desire to his/her benefit. After all, tourists choose to get away from their place of permanent residence for some time to meet multiple needs (Komppula, 2014).

Categories of incentives:

- natural and climatic incentives
- cultural incentives
- financial incentives
- psychological incentives

The choice of the type of travel to be made by a tourist depends on his/her expectations to a large extent. The types of travels are as follows:

- Natural tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Social tourism
- Active tourism
- Recreational tourism
- Specialized tourism
- Religious tourism
- Health tourism
- National tourism

These types of travel are also incentives for tourists to make their holidays (Stylidis et al., 2014). The travel attraction incentives are as follows:

- entertainment - relaxation – recreation
- adventure
- business reasons
- educational reasons
- sporting events
- shopping
- health reasons
- cultural reasons

It is worth noting that these factors are different each time, depending on the current economic, social and political circumstances. Thus, for 2010, the criteria that tourists took into account in the evaluation and finally in the choice of their tourism destinations according to an ABTA survey are the following (Cho, Bonn and Brymer, 2017):

**1. Safety:** Destinations that due to instability (economic, political, social unrest, etc.) constituted a prohibitive choice for a trip in the past marked a significant increase in tourists' preferences after their situation stabilized. Typical examples of such destinations are Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Croatia.

**2. Accessibility:** The accessibility factor is related to the legislative and regulatory framework and possible bureaucratic obstacles resulting from them. The easiness of issuing a visa or not as well as the procedure's costs, are a basic reason for choosing or rejecting a destination.

**3. Infrastructures:** A destination can become more attractive after its infrastructures are upgraded (roads, ports, airports, etc.). Increased investment by countries in order to improve their infrastructures is mainly aimed at attracting tourists of higher income classes. Examples of this practice are Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco, who have seen their visitors' numbers rising rapidly.

**4. Price:** Today, due to the international financial crisis, tourists want the well-known value for money. Thus, destinations that were traditionally considered to be of high standards and reduced their prices were the winners of this period. As far as European destinations are concerned, the exchange rates have proved to be particularly damaging to them.

**5. Climatic conditions:** This is an important criterion for choosing a holiday destination. It appears that countries with a warmer climate attract more tourists.

**6. Specificity-Diversity of the destination:** ABTA characterizes this factor as an x-factor, meaning that, in addition to all the above points, a destination may be popular to tourists because it has something special. This particular feature will be unique and will completely differentiate the destination from the others. For this reason, ABTA can not specify the "x-factor" and simply states that it is a destination where the tourist will consider that he/she had the best holidays in his/her life. As examples of such destinations, ABTA reports New York, which became an ideal destination for shoppers after the series *Sex and the City*, South Africa due to the world football championship, and space, given the fact that the first test flights with a spacecraft are completed in a few months.

## 5.2. The Concept of Tourism

There is no exact definition of the concept in question, although many have been introduced over the years. We can distinguish five basic features of the concept (Li et al., 2017):

- Tourism is the result of individual or collective movement of people to various tourist destinations and their stay for at least 24 hours in order to satisfy their recreational needs.
- The various forms of tourism necessarily include two basic elements: the trip to the tourist destination and accommodation, including food.
- Travel and accommodation take place outside the place of permanent residence of people who decide to move for tourism purposes.
- The movement of people to various tourism destinations is of a temporary and short-term nature, meaning that they intend to return to their permanent residence within a few days, weeks or months.
- People visit tourism destinations for tourist purposes, namely for reasons other than in their permanent residence or professional occupation.

In 1941, Professors Hunziker and Krapf of the University of Bern supported the view that tourism can be defined as all the phenomena and relationships that result from making a trip to a destination and staying in it by non-permanent residents.

In 1937, the Committee of Experts of the League of Nations recommended to its member countries to adopt a definition that described the tourist as a person traveling for a period of 24 hours or more in a country other than the one in which he/she lives permanently (Sharpley and Telfer, 2015).

Two and a half decades later, in 1963, the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in Rome, agreed that the term visitor should describe any person visiting a country other than the one where he/she is a permanent resident for any reason other than the exercise of a profession to be paid with the funds of the country they visit. This definition covers two categories of visitors (Vanhove, 2017):

- Tourists: people who visit a country and stay there for at least 24 hours and whose reasons for visiting are most often for vacation, business, health, studies, participation in a mission or meeting or conference, visiting friends or relatives, religious and sports.
- Excursionists: people who visit a country and stay there for less than a 24-hour period. These include cruise passengers, visitors coming and departing on the same day without overnight stays, as well as crews of ships, planes etc. (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2016).

According to the Tussyadiah and Sigala (2018), the main role of tourism marketing focuses on three parameters. In particular, it aims at the proper management and direction of the purchasing behavior of customers at every level (order, day, week, month, etc.) in order to maximize the utilization of the production capacity and at the same time to increase the sales without increasing the cost.

Tourism is also a special service with the following additional features:

- Demand seasonality and variations
- Interdependence of individual tourism products – sectors
- High fixed cost

As stated above in the definition, the main components of tourism are the destination and the tourist.

## 5.3. The Concept of the Destination Image

The image of a destination is often mentioned in studies and is recognized in several models of travel decisions and behavior as a powerful factor influencing the decision-making process of potential tourists at the pre-purchase stage (Dolnicar and Ring, 2014).

The image of the destination is identified as a conceptual prototype and the concept of the tourist image includes the characteristics of the destination along with the impression it creates in the perception of the individual. As Sharpley (2014) points out, “the information that tourists have at their disposal before visiting an area is usually complemented by their own mental image of the area. In many cases, it is likely that the tourists’ decision to visit a place is based more on the image they have created according to their perception than on real information”.

Also, in a related article (Boes, Buhalis and Inversini, 2015), the features that comprise the image of a tourist destination are presented, which are the result of multiple surveys aimed at examining the perceived image for a destination. These features include natural beauty, hospitality, nightlife, infrastructure, security, and so on.

In addition, the Komppula categorization (2014) identifies the following three dimensions that represent the image of a destination:

**First dimension** - Functional/Physical/Psychological Features: While the physical characteristics are readily perceived (weather, infrastructure, etc.), psychological elements are intangible and difficult to measure (e.g. the romantic atmosphere of a destination) with the exception of the variable in relation to the hospitality of the local population (Bruwer and Joy, 2017).

**Second Dimension** - Common/Unique Features: The above features may be either shared, meaning they can be compared to other destinations, or unique, meaning that they are images and/or events that are exclusive to the image of a particular destination.

**Third dimension** - Overall image: presented as a combination of the above-mentioned features.

Boes, Buhalis and Inversini (2016) highlighted the fact that selection behavior is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes some expected benefits, which are important factors for choosing a destination. Similarly, Kiralova and Pavlixeka (2015) argue that the image of a destination is shaped by the expected benefits of the product.

#### 5.4. The Expectations of Tourists

In general, the beneficial image of a destination refers to the perceptions or impressions that tourists have of a destination in relation to the expected benefit, including functional, social, emotional, scientific and casual benefits of a destination (consumption values). These perceptions/impressions in turn convert the decision for a leisure trip of tourists into a destination choice. The categorization of tourists' expectations is the following (Chiu et al., 2016):

- *Functional benefit*: It is based on the assumption that a customer will choose the alternative with the best image in relation to the functional and utility features, or at least the alternative that includes the majority of these features.
- *Social benefit*: It is based on the assumption that the customer will prefer a destination whose image is related to the groups to which he or she belongs, or to which he or she identifies with or to which he or she intends to approach.
- *Emotional benefit*: In this case, the customer will choose the destination that can offer certain feelings.
- *Epistemic benefit*: these are the values the customer expects to derive from a destination and include concepts such as innovation, diversity and fashion.
- *Conditional benefit*: this concept means that the customer will choose a destination based on his/her previous experience.

Relative research into the aforementioned categorization of tourists' expectations (Michalko, Irnias and Timothy, 2015) showed that there is a strong correlation between the beneficial image of a destination and its selection, which highlights the importance of this factor in the process of making a travel decision.

#### 6. Conclusions

According to Boes, Buhalis and Inversini (2015), consumer behavior refers to the process of acquiring and organizing information for purchasing, using and evaluating products and services. This process includes the stages of search, purchase, use and evaluation of goods and services.

The purchasing behavior of the tourist presents some particular elements. In particular, this is an investment with a non-tangible rate of return, and the purchase is often prepared and organized after saving for a long time. This means that the tourist will invest without expecting tangible or financial return.

There are many factors that affect the behavior of the individual. As far as tourism marketing is concerned, it should be understood how people perceive concepts such as destination, air travel, travel distances and travel advertising. Also, how they consume and travel, how they make travel decisions and how these decisions are affected by the personality of the individual. In addition, it is necessary to analyze the incentives behind travel decisions, the way in which behaviors are shaped and how the various groups (contact, inspiration, renunciation, avoidance) affect the travel behavior.

It is advisable to take into account the wider economic and social factors that may exacerbate or reduce a person's disposal for various recreational activities. The increase in energy costs, the trend towards smaller family units, the improvement of communication channels, and the access of more people to higher education are examples of the factors that should be studied in order to determine the trends in tourism in relation to local, national or international markets (Adeyinka-Ojo, Khoo-Lattimore and Nair, 2014).

A person's travel decisions are influenced by external forces called social influences. These social influences can be grouped into four main categories, which are: (1) roles and family influences, (2) reference groups, (3) social classes, and (4) culture and subculture (Mason, 2015).

The analysis of consumer behavior requires the examination of various processes, whether internal or external to the individual. Thus, in order to understand the behavior, it is necessary to study the way in which the data presented at different stages, from the purchase decision, to the post-purchase behavior.

Also, taking into account more parameters of purchasing behavior, Van Niekerk (2017) introduced a theoretical model of the purchasing behavior of tourists. More generally, Gowreesunkar, Van der Sterren and Seraphin (2015) argued that a conceptual framework is a simplified but organized and logical representation of the functioning of a real system. That is, a theoretical model identifies the basic elements of a system - such as customer attitudes, occasional factors and purchasing behavior - and the relationships between these elements. Purchasing behavior models are a very important tool for designing and coordinating research studies. The model consists of three parts: (i) the process before and during the decision, (ii) the post-purchase evaluation, and (iii) the future decision-making.

Similarly, Huan (2015) argued that the key concerns about the behavior of the tourist are the decision-making process for purchasing tourism products and the way he or she responds to the various marketing stimuli. Initially, a classification of behavioral factors is made: cultural (culture, social class, etc.), social (family), personal (age, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle) and psychological (beliefs, perceptions, motivations, etc.). A decision-making process is then presented divided into five individual stages (Huan, 2015):

**Stage One:** This includes the identification of the need where the customer identifies a difference between the actual situation in which he or she is and the desired situation in which he/she expects to be found pushed by internal or external stimuli.

**Stage Two:** This involves the searching for and the collection of information where the customer knows the existing alternatives and their features. The extent of the information to be sought depends on the incentive's power to make the purchase, the initial information he/she has, the ease of obtaining additional information and the degree of satisfaction through the search for information. The sources of information according to Kotler are three: personal (family, friends, acquaintances), commercial (advertising, salesmen, merchants etc) and public (consumer associations, articles, reviews etc.). It is believed that the personal resources are the ones that have the most influence on the customer's decision because they are perceived as more reliable, especially in terms of services (Beritelli, Bieger and Laesser, 2014).

**Stage Three:** Refers to the evaluation of the individual alternatives where the customer perceives each good as a set of attributes, giving more weight to those characteristics that are related to his/her needs and desires which offers the benefits he/she seeks. The set of the beliefs that the customer formulates for each of the alternatives, in terms of their individual characteristics, is the so-called product image, which forms the basis for the formation of attitudes for each alternative.

**Stage Four:** Includes the decision to make a purchase that follows the purchase intention, where it is possible for unpredictable factors to occur that can alter, postpone or even block the purchase decision.

**Stage Five:** This refers to the post-purchase behavior where a customer's satisfaction with the purchase of a good/service is determined by the relationship between the individual's expectations and the perceived quality of the good/service. Satisfaction occurs when the perceived quality felt by the customer is not inferior to the expected. The latter is modeled on the person's previous experience and the information he/she receives from various sources. The behavior shown by customers after the purchase is linked to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they feel. In the first case, it is possible to repeat a purchase and encourage friends or acquaintances to purchase the good/service, while in the latter case the dissatisfied customers take action to reduce the feeling of frustration.

According to relevant university surveys (Martin, Rosenbaum and Ham, 2015), it has been observed that the various marketing stimuli and not only affect the above-mentioned purchasing process of the individual while they are introduced into the consumer's black box where they are processed. The result of this process is the choices the buyer will make about the good (product or service), the brand, the supplier, the time and the amount of the purchase. The black box of the consumer consists of two parts: a) the personal characteristics that affect the way he or she understands and reacts to the stimulus and the decision-making process of the buyer that interferes with the outcome.

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