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TOURISM IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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FACULTY OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM IN VRNJAČKA BANJA

TOURISM IN THE FUNCTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Tourism is an activity that can improve main macroeconomic indicators. The opportunities for sustainable tourism development and the preservation of its competitiveness is largely influenced by the quality of the environment and the preservation of goods and resources. The paper will examine the impact of the number of international arrivals and receipts from international tourism on the GDP per capita for 2009-2015 and its impact on unemployment and the human development index as the selected component of sustainable development. Based on the relationship between these values, the basic relations between the selected indicators will be identified. The results will include all aspects, establish priorities, concrete proposals - strategic projects that can be realized in the coming period in order to increase the number of tourists and tourism revenues, which would affect the economic growth and development of the Republic of Serbia.

Key Words: *tourism, sustainable development, competitiveness, GDP, unemployment*
JEL classification: *Z32, Z38*

Introduction

Tourism is an important component of national economies and is becoming an increasingly important sector in the economies of many countries. This economic branch, especially through the growth of international arrivals and tourism receipts, affects the creation of new jobs and the promotion of employment. Consequently, the volume of business in other branches related to tourism also grows and it has a multiplied impact, which further affects the growth of total GDP and GDP per

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capita, as well as the Human Development Index as the main component of the measure of material welfare of the society and the sustainable development of an economy. Striving to be better when it comes to destinations in tourism is of great importance, taking into account the increasing growth of competitiveness of destinations.

The Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 defines the goals of future development in tourism (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016).

According to the set of goals, the strategic determination in the development of the tourism of the Republic of Serbia is the growth of the competitiveness of Serbian tourist destinations, positioning both on the domestic and foreign markets. This would lead to the growth of total GDP and the number of employees, which would further reflect in the sustainable economic development of the Republic of Serbia and the improvement of its position on the world level.

Bearing in mind this relation, *the subject of work* is the identification of the relationship between international arrivals and tourism receipts with key indicators of sustainable development in the Republic of Serbia and their comparison with the countries of South-East Europe in the period 2009-2015. In this context, *the main goal* of the work will be focused on the constraints and basic opportunities in tourism that are offered in order to achieve the increase of GDP per capita, employment and the Human Development Index as a comprehensive component of sustainable development.

In accordance with the subject and purpose of the research, the basic assumption from which the work begins is:
H1: If the Republic of Serbia improves the competitiveness of tourist destinations and the increasing number of international arrivals, as well as international receipts from tourism, the indicators of sustainable growth and development of its economy and better positioning in the region and the world will increase.

Tourism and sustainable development

Unlike the views of liberal economists, according to which the freedom of action of market actors is the most efficient source of prosperity in society, the practice has shown that the market is not able to completely

regulate economic relations in the light of frequent monopoly, unemployment, inflation, environmental pollution, unacceptable disparities in the distribution of income, cyclical trends in the form of recession and expansion, especially in certain economic sectors. Although economic policies and the functioning of the market are often seen as alternative mechanisms, the market and the state can act complementarily in the direction of complementarities, in line with the available administrative and institutional capacities (Aikins, 2009). Therefore, modern economies seek to solve key economic issues through the coordination and combination of market and state regulation (Pavic et al, 2007).

The public sector plays a significant role in improving the efficiency of the market in order to stabilize and create an adequate business environment that will benefit the economy, increase productivity and, therefore, also reflect on tourism.

The development of tourism brings visible economic benefits to the tourist countries (Petković et al., 2011). Therefore, tourism should be seen as a branch that can be quite impressive both on the economic and sustainable development of a country.

The main components of sustainable development relate to the constant interaction of economic, social and environmental factors (Đorđević & Obradović, 2011). Bearing this in mind, sustainability is gaining in importance and becomes one of the strategic goals of many national economies, including the Republic of Serbia. Sustainability as a strategic goal encompasses the optimization of numerous interactions of nature, society and economy, but according to the criteria of ecology, not just economics (Đorđević, 2009).

There is no doubt that there is a connection between tourism and economic development. In some countries, tourism has influenced economic development, and somewhere it was the opposite. For example, economic development has encouraged the development of tourism in Croatia (Payne & Mervar, 2010), while tourism has encouraged the development of the economy in Greece (Dritsakis, 2004). That is why it is essential to improve the competitiveness of tourist destinations in order to improve the parameters of tourism and thus act on the economic growth and development of the country.

Competitiveness of tourist destinations and their incentives

The competitiveness of tourist destinations attracts increasing attention, especially when taking into account the issue of its improvement and incentives, which would create the basis for increasing the number of tourists and receipts from tourism to a more competitive destination, and consequently to the sustainable development, of both destinations and countries in whole.

Porter's concept of competitiveness of countries (1990) has become the basis for the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) introduced the concept of competitiveness of the tourist destination in the modern sense. They sought to include all the key factors that influenced the competitiveness of destination. Other authors also dealt with this question (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007; Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

In order to observe the competitiveness of destinations, one has to look at its results, which are measured in different ways. The performance of the destination concerns the ability of the destination to transform its material and human resources into the desired results, ie arrivals, nights, employment, visitors' satisfaction (Cracolici et al., 2008). Destination performance indicators have a quantitative and qualitative dimension (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). The quantitative indicators include those on tourist arrivals and consumption that will be observed in this paper, and hence the employment created by the development of tourism, as well as other which tourism directly or indirectly affected by sustainable development, while in qualitative include estimates and comparisons provided by tourists.

The Law on Tourism ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 36/2009, 88/2010, 99/2011 - other law, 93/2012 and 84/2015) and the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016) defined the conditions and modes of tourism planning and development, as well as the implementation of incentive measures for the development of tourism in the Republic of Serbia.

The main goal of tourism development in Serbia is Serbia's proposal of priority tourist destinations, the development of tourism products, the competitiveness plan and the other in line with economic, social, ecological and cultural-historical development.

The goals of sustainable development – a new opportunity for tourism

Apart from the fact that tourism development is of great importance as the potential for economic growth and development, creating new added value and new employment has a great impact on the improvement and continuous improvement of the image of the country (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016).

In 2015, countries around the world adopted a series of 17 goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and secure prosperity, as part of a new sustainable development program. The UN SDG program consists of specific goals planned for realization by 2030. (WTTC, 2017)

The role of tourism in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) can be significantly strengthened when sustainable development becomes a shared responsibility and moves to the core of decision making in the tourism sector. The joint efforts of World Tourism Organization, United Nations Development Programme and other partners, tourism and sustainable development goals are aimed at building knowledge, empowering and encouraging stakeholders in tourism to undertake the necessary activities in order to accelerate the transition to a more sustainable tourism sector by harmonizing policies, business and investment with the SDG (UNWTO, 2018).

Competitiveness remains a main initiator for sustainability companies. Tourist companies are most likely to contact the SDG team to improve their business. This, in turn, supports the business case for sustainability (UNWTO, 2018).

Encouraging the development of the travel and tourism sector (T & T) today is the most important given its important role in creating new jobs, at a time when many countries suffer from high unemployment.

Travel and tourism remains a key sector for development and economic growth for the advancement and development of economies. Developing a strong T & T sector supports the creation of new jobs, increases domestic income, and also benefits the overall competitiveness of the economy through improvements in infrastructure. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

The Travel&Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) has been developed within the context of the World Economic Forum's Industry Partnership Programme for the Aviation, Travel & Tourism sector. The TTCI aims to measure the factors and policies that make it attractive to develop the T&T sector in different countries (World Economic Forum, 2013).

If we look at the ranking and estimates for Southeast Europe of the Travel and Tourism Index in 2013 of the observed 140 countries, we have the following situation: Greece is 32nd, followed by Croatia at 35th, Montenegro at 40th, Bulgaria at 50th, Romania at 68th, Macedonia at 75th, Albania at 77th, Serbia is at 89th and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina at 90th place (World Economic Forum, 2013). From here it can be seen that Serbia is at the penultimate, which means that a lot of things need to be done and changed in order to get closer, first to the region and then to the world on this issue.

Development of tourism in Serbia

From the TTCI shown, Serbia is seen as a tourist destination out of international competition. Therefore, tourism is increasingly seen as one of the important strategic determinants of Serbia's economic development. Since Serbia has not adjusted its tourist offer to global trends yet, many changes in the global tourism market have bypassed it. Tourism resources are not valorised enough, accommodation capacities are of unsatisfactory quality, lack of diversified tourist products, as well as the concept of sustainable tourism that was complementary to the economic and natural settlements. Therefore, special emphasis is placed on improving the competitiveness of the tourist offer and the concept of sustainable development in order to make Serbia better positioned in the tourism market, and hence tourism has provided a greater share in the development of the entire economy.

Serbian economy is not sufficiently competitive. As the matter of fact, the Serbian enterprises are very slow with their activities (Durkalić et al., 2016).

The literature often defines sustainable tourism as a positive approach seeking to reduce tensions that are the result of complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, environment and society as a host (Bošković, 2008).

Tourism is developing thanks to the development of infrastructure and the shift of focus from the primary and secondary to the tertiary sector (Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, 2014).

Strengthening economic competitiveness in a specific spatial environment will enable greater economic growth and a higher standard of living. In this regard, in order to strengthen the competencies and responsibilities for more efficient development of local self-government units and regional entities, systematic support from the state and / or institutions (regional development agencies) responsible for areas with special development problems is necessary (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 2010).

With the development of mass tourism travel and standardization of tourist's services, people have turned to natural, preserved and clean environment, such as rural areas in search of an authentic experience (Vuković et al, 2012).

When considering the area of tourism within the sustainable development of the Serbian economy, development of different types of tourism (urban, health, mountain, water tourism etc.) is envisaged for a spatial-functional organization (tourist zones, spaces and tourist destinations) (Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, 2010).

The increase or decrease in the number of tourists shows the level of attractiveness of the area, the quality and diversity of the offer, and to what extent are the existing complementary local activities integrated with tourism (Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, 2014).

Table 1: *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays annually in the Republic of Serbia 2009 -2015*

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Domestic	5231024	4961359	5001684	4688485	4579067	3925221	4242172
Foreign	1463467	1452156	1643054	1796217	1988393	2161054	2409680
In total	6694491	6413515	6644738	6484702	6567460	6086275	6651852

Source: *RZS*

All changes will be observed in relation to the selected base year, 2009.

Table 2: *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the Republic of Serbia 2009-2015 compared to 2009 (2009 = 100) and the rate of change (St)*

Years		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Domestic	Base Index	100	94.84	95.62	89.63	87.54	75.04	81.10
	St	0	-5.16	-4.38	-10.37	-12.46	-24.96	-18.90
Foreign	Base Index	100	99.23	112.27	122.74	135.87	147.67	164.66
	St	0	-0.77	12.27	22.74	35.87	47.67	64.66
In total	Base Index	100	95.80	99.26	96.87	98.10	90.91	99.36
	St	0	-4.20	-0.74	-3.13	-1.90	-9.09	-0.64

Source: *Author*

From here, it can be seen that the number of domestic tourists has dropped, so that the increase in foreign ones could not compensate for this, because in total we have a constantly smaller number of tourists compared to 2009. Therefore, we need to base our efforts on attracting and promoting tourist destinations among domestic tourists in the form of free vouchers, etc. In accordance with the vision of development for the period 2016-2020, this is the period in which tourism is growing based on alignment with trends, raising quality, introducing an incentive system, continuing the process of EU integration, more efficient use of funds (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016).

Methodology of standardization

Firstly, the original values in the field of tourism will be presented, which will be standardized and based on them, the composite index will be calculated and ranked by the countries surveyed.

Table 3: *International tourism, number of arrivals (000)*

Countries	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Albania	1711	2191	2469	3156	2857	3341	3784
B&H	311	365	392	439	529	536	678
Croatia	8694	9111	9927	10369	10948	11623	12683
Macedonia	259	262	327	351	400	425	486
Bulgaria	5739	6047	6328	6541	6898	7311	7099
Romania	7575	7498	7611	7937	8019	8442	9331
Serbia	645	683	764	810	922	1029	1132
Greece	14915	15007	16427	15518	17920	22033	23599
Montenegro	1044	1088	1201	1264	1324	1350	1560

Source: *World Bank*

From here, it can be seen that Serbia, together with B&H and Macedonia, achieves the worst results year after year.

Table 4: *International tourism, receipts (billion US$)*

Countries	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Albania	2.014	1.78	1.833	1.623	1.67	1.849	1.614
B&H	753	662	722	686	752	755	702
Croatia	9.3	8.299	9.598	8.912	9.715	10.079	9.018
Macedonia	232	199	242	237	270	298	268
Bulgaria	4.273	3.807	4.297	3.975	4.41	4.518	3.583
Romania	1.688	1.631	2.016	1.904	2.048	2.225	2.097
Serbia	986	950	1.149	1.08	1.221	1.352	1.322
Greece	16.027	13.858	16.256	14.671	17.436	19.481	17.26
Montenegro	792	765	926	860	929	959	947

* 000 000 US$: for Serbia in 2009& 2010., B&H, Macedonia, Montenegro
Source: *World Bank*

Here there is a similar situation as in the previous table, where Serbia is better than Montenegro, B&H and Macedonia.

Regarding the indicators of sustainable development in addition to GDP per capita and unemployment, we need a measure that will express sustainability of development (measuring taking into account, for example, spending of resources and deterioration of the environment, as well as increasing indebtedness), state of health and education. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has designed a broader measure that includes education, health and income (Stiglic, 2013).

Table 5: *Human Development Index, 2009-2015*

Countries	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Albania	0.725	0.738	0.752	0.759	0.761	0.762	0.764
B&H	0.717	0.711	0.728	0.735	0.742	0.747	0.750
Croatia	0.803	0.808	0.815	0.817	0.820	0.823	0.827
Macedonia	0.732	0.735	0.739	0.741	0.743	0.746	0.748
Bulgaria	0.770	0.775	0.778	0.781	0.787	0.792	0.794
Romania	0.797	0.798	0.797	0.794	0.797	0.798	0.802
Serbia	0.755	0.757	0.767	0.766	0.771	0.775	0.776
Greece	0.859	0.860	0.858	0.860	0.862	0.865	0.866
Montenegro	0.787	0.792	0.797	0.799	0.803	0.804	0.807

Source: *United Nations*

The task of empirical research is to determine the relationship between international arrivals and receipts from tourism with GDP per capita, unemployment and the index of human development as a measure that best reflects this broader measure of sustainability of development.

In order to obtain comparable data and form a composite index, since the values of individual indicators are not expressed by the same units, it is necessary to perform standardization (Tchangani, 2006). The standardized data from all five groups of data and the determination of the maximum (1) and minimum (0) values by years (2009, 2010, ..., 2015), the results obtained ranging from 0 to 1 should be reduced to the average values of the observed indicators per country for the entire observed period, in order to convert the obtained result and to determine the rank of each country (Guojun et al., 2007).

Secondary sources of data were used as the data source for the composite index formation, primarily the World Bank Source database. In addition, UNCTADstat and United Nations databases were used.

For the indicator of *unemployment,* the standardized value by determining the maximum and the minimum value will be established according to the form:

$$\alpha_i = (x_i - x_{max}) / (x_{min} - x_{max}), \qquad (1)$$

For the indicators of *International tourism, number of arrivals, International tourism, receipts, GDP growth rate per capita and Human Development Index,* the standardized value by determining the maximum and the minimum value will be established according to the form:

$$\alpha_i = (x_i - x_{min}) / (x_{max} - x_{min}), \qquad (2)$$

where the indicated marks are: αi - the standardized value of each original data, X_i - the value of the original data, X_{min} - the minimum value of the data in a given year, X_{max} - the maximum value of the data in a given year.

Indicators in the field of tourism will be especially observed and, according to their change, we will determine the correlation with sustainable development and the change of these indicators. As a measure of the strength of the simple linear correlation relation in the sample will

be Pirson's coefficient of simple linear correlation, which shows the degree of straight line quantitative agreement of two phenomena, is used (Lovrić, 2009). There are different interpretations of the correlation size, but one can distinguish one according to which the correlation is small if the coefficient of correlation is from 0.10 to 0.29, the correlation is the medium if the coefficient of 0,30-0,49 and the correlation is high for coefficient values of 0,50-1,0 (Pallant, 2011).

Research results: composite index and country ranking

After all previous indicators are standardized by the given forms, the last segment presents the results of the survey, i.e. the individual average values of all indicators by countries and the value of the composite index, which represent the average indicators in tourism as well as the indicators of sustainable development, for the whole period of observation (2009-2015).

Table 6: *Average indicator values and country rankings (2009-2015)*

Countries	International tourism, arrivals		International tourism receipts		GDP growth rate per capita		Unemployment		HDI	
	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank
Albania	0.138	5	0.095	5	0.800	2	0.637	4	0.149	7
B&H	0.006	8	0.029	8	0.768	4	0.126	8	0.004	9
Croatia	0.583	2	0.561	2	0.444	8	0.661	3	0.650	2
Macedonia	0.000	9	0.000	9	0.830	1	0.001	9	0.058	8
Bulgaria	0.360	4	0.241	3	0.744	5	0.839	2	0.387	5
Romania	0.447	3	0.105	4	0.784	3	0.999	1	0.500	4
Serbia	0.028	7	0.056	6	0.581	7	0.425	6	0.264	6
Greece	1.000	1	1.000	1	0.101	9	0.386	7	1.000	1
Montenegro	0.052	6	0.039	7	0.657	6	0.474	5	0.511	3

Source: *Author*

In all observed indicators, it can be seen that Serbia occupies mostly 7th or 6th position of the observed 9 countries, which means that it is mostly among the worst results.

It remains to determine the correlation coefficient between the composite index for tourism and for sustainable development, as well as between ranks. If the composite index is first observed, the coefficient of correlation is positive and is 0.34, the medium correlation. When we look

at the coefficient of correlation of the rankings, the result is also a positive one and it is 0.67, a high correlation.

Table 7: *Average values of composite index and country rank (2009-2015)*

Countries	Indicator of tourism		Sustainable development indicator	
	The value of the composite index	Country rank	The value of the composite index	Country rank
Albania	0.117	5	0.529	5
B&H	0.018	8	0.299	8
Croatia	0.572	2	0.585	3
Macedonia	0.000	9	0.296	9
Bulgaria	0.301	3	0.656	2
Romania	0.276	4	0.761	1
Serbia	0.042	7	0.423	7
Greece	1.000	1	0.496	6
Montenegro	0.046	6	0.547	4

Source: *Author*

From the observed, it is seen that the correlation in both cases is positive, which means that if tourism indicators improve, this will also affect the sustainable development of a country. The most pronounced impact is on rankings where the correlation coefficient is high and which is reflected in the case of several countries. Serbia is the country ranked seventh in terms of indicators in tourism and sustainable development and where we have total compatibility of the impact of tourism on sustainable development.

The only negative thing is that both indicators of Serbia are at the bottom of the table in relation to the region and that a lot of attention should be dedicated to improving the indicators of tourism, and therefore the economic growth and development of the Republic of Serbia.

Conclusion

Today Serbia has only comparative advantages in tourism that need to be transformed into competitive ones. These comparative advantages are definitely not being used enough among domestic tourists who are obviously still attractive to foreign markets. Therefore, we should work

on promoting tourist destinations as well as improving the quality that these destinations offer and that satisfy the needs of tourists, in order to become more competitive and to improve the situation in this field, and thus attract more foreign tourists.

The whole travel and tourism sector, which is a key sector for economic growth and development, should also be encouraged, bearing in mind that according to the TTCI index Serbia also has among the worst results in the region.

Among the worst results achieved in relation to the region, Serbia also achieves in international arrivals and tourism receipts that have been selected for the key indicators of tourism, and hence the same situation as regards sustainable development. Serbia is ranked in the same way as it relates to indicators of tourism and sustainable development. In addition to this, the ratios of correlation coefficient are high, from where we can conclude that the hypothesis is proven, which is especially pronounced in Serbia where the ranks coincide. This is another reason why special attention needs to be dedicated to increasing the number of tourists arrivals and receipts from tourism, which will certainly have an impact on improving economic growth and development, as well as the overall sustainable development in the future of the Republic of Serbia.

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